

DOCTORAL THESIS

Equality policies, their implementation, and their effects on children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia

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**Equality policies, their implementation, and their effects on
children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia**

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A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
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List of Abbreviations

AHDC	Aiming High for Disabled Children
CRPD	The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001-2007)
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment (1995-2001)
EYFS	The Early Years Foundation Stage
EAFSNE	European Agency for Development in Special Educational Needs
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MOE	Ministry Of Education
MOHE	Ministry Of Higher Education
MOF	Ministry OF Finance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
PMSU	Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
SEN	Special educational needs
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International children's Emergency Fund
CRC	The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UK	United Kingdom
WHO	World Health Organization

Abstract

This thesis explores inclusive practices in four pre-schools to study how the inclusion of children with disabilities operates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Educational inclusion is just one aspect of how governments approach the integration of all children into their societies. Theoretical aspects, such as equality, children's rights and social justice, all underlie this inclusion.

The United Nations introduced conventions on the rights of children that contain specific provisions for children with disabilities. However, to date, academic research about the integration of children with disabilities in the KSA is limited. This study therefore examines the stance of the Saudi government on this subject; how well the practices comply with the UN Conventions, and Saudi government recommendations; what obstacles might exist which prevent true inclusion; and how these obstacles might be overcome.

To achieve these aims, this study utilised and triangulated a range of qualitative methods, using documentary analysis, questionnaires, interviews and observations to gather salient data. The findings show that the Saudi government has written a clear policy concerning inclusion, and that this complies with both the UN Conventions about access to education, as well as with Saudi policy.

There are however, major gaps between what the Saudi government has said it would like to achieve and what is shown in practice. This thesis concludes with the implications of these findings, offering a range of recommendations for how these gaps can be narrowed and how the obstacles to true inclusion can be overcome in the KSA.

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The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference EUD 12/ 031 in the Department of Education and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 18.12.12

Chapter 1. Introduction and rationale for the study

1.1. Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the inclusion of children with disabilities in pre-schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The motivation to undertake this study arose from my personal interest and professional experience. I chose this topic due to the fact that I am a Saudi Arabian national and the mother of children with disabilities. This has given me first-hand insight into the options available to pre-school children with disabilities in my home country which, in turn, made me aware of several gaps and failings in the system. Moreover, my previous studies on the rights of children, as well as my work experience in Saudi Arabia that centred on pre-school education, gave me additional insight into some of the challenges that children may face in this environment. Combined, my work experience and that of being a mother in this context fuelled my belief that the rights of children with disabilities are possibly not being met by current practices in Saudi pre-schools, despite having been explicitly outlined in Saudi Arabian government policy. This research is thus predicated on this belief. My aim is to determine whether this is, in fact, the case and, if so, what could be done to improve the present situation. It is for this reason that I chose this stage of education as the focal point of the present study, compounded by the fact that children's development and their subsequent sense of their rights as human beings are seeded in early childhood; this is, arguably, particularly the case for those either experiencing special educational needs or requiring special provision. In light of this, I also engage with the notion of external rights afforded to children, attempting to determine how the rights of children with disabilities have been implemented and monitored in pre-schools in the KSA.

I have constructed this thesis on the conceptual basis of children's rights, as manifest in the United Nation Children's Rights Commission (UNCRC). The best way to achieve equality for children with disabilities is, arguably, to ensure that the education system accepts responsibility for all children. This requires fundamental changes to both education and society, thus inevitably encompassing questions of education

policy. Given that, in the KSA, the influence of Islam in reaching decisions concerning children's rights cannot be over-emphasised, some tensions may arise in the country between its specific social and cultural context and the UNCRC's basis of children's rights.

As stated above, the rights of children to reach their full potential have been outlined by the UN and by many member states, including Saudi Arabia (Rajabi-Ardeshiri, 2009; UNICEF, 2012b). The KSA signed up to the UNCRC in 1996. Explicit support for these rights can also be found within the tenets of Islam. Islamic Shariah law is at the core of Saudi society, and provides justification for any changes in practice that should be considered in order to improve the rights of children with disabilities. For example, Article 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (UN, 2012), and the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights states that "it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems" (OHCHR, 2012). O'Brian (2010) likewise defends the view that all persons should be treated equally, yet individually, before the law. All people, including individuals with disabilities, have equivalent rights. Understandings of disability have also been illustrated with particular reference to disability among children in different contexts, with the resultant agreement that children all over the world have the same fundamental rights. In particular, children with disabilities should have the same equal rights afforded to them as to their typically developing peers by the society they live in.

1.2. Research Questions:

In particular, the research focuses on two main questions:

- A. To what extent have policies for the inclusion of SEN children been implemented in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia?
- B. What are the tensions arising from the interaction of Saudi Arabian culture, structure and SEN policy elements?

Based on these research questions, the following section introduces the KSA and discusses its educational system, with a particular focus on pre-schools.

1.3. The KSA: background and educational system

The KSA is one of the largest countries in the Middle East, covering an area of approximately 2,149,690 square kilometres. The country's population passed 29.7 million in 2015, of which some 25% are aged 15 or under (UNICEF, 2013). In 2014, there were 182,556 children aged four to six in pre-schools provision, forming 10%-12% of the KSA's children; this percentage drops to around 5% in villages (MOE, 2014), which may be the result of a less urbanised working environment. This points to the appropriateness of the KSA as a case study for research in the early years' education setting.

The country is relatively young, having been formed in 1932 by the royal decree of an amalgamation of tribes under the leadership of the Al Saud family. The first ruler of Saudi Arabia was King Abdul Aziz and the country remains a monarchy under his descendants, the ruling Saud family, with strict adherence to Islamic Shariah law. All the sons of King Abdul Aziz who have ruled have done much to improve the nation as a whole. For example, the country's large oil reserves have meant it has grown quite wealthy, with significant investment having been made by the royal family from this wealth in the improvement of the lives of all Saudi nationals over the last 50 years. This can be seen in improvements to infrastructure, or bringing in experts who helped to change what used to be a relatively backward country into a modern one (Al Hamid et al., 2005). The current ruling monarch, King Salman, has pledged to continue with these improvements, including a stated commitment to improving the education available to all the Kingdom's children.

Indeed, education is considered to be one of the major elements of the country's development and participation is compulsory from the age of six years, with both boys and girls now being expected to complete 12 years of education (Al-mousa,

2010). In Saudi Arabia, education is free at every level, although some parents choose to educate their children privately, at their own cost. Schools are classified into elementary (primary), intermediate (middle), and secondary schools.

Between 2005 and 2009, net enrolment and attendance at primary schools was estimated to be 85%, the remaining 15% not attending schools for diverse reasons. For example, people who live in the desert regions are less able to access schools, which are typically located in more urban areas (Al Hamid et al., 2005). It should be noted that although 82% of the population live in cities, there remain many smaller village communities across the KSA whose families may not have the resources to send their children to city schools. Additionally, this may be due to the fact that the early years' provision is not compulsory and often parents prefer to keep their younger children within the family environment (Al Hamid et al., 2005).

In order to deal with the increasing school population, since 2011 the KSA has engaged in a major schools building initiative, the Future Schools Building Programme; this programme is expected to result in the creation of a total of 4,500 new schools by 2021 (MOE, 2012). The focus has also been on hiring a large number of teachers, and improving the system in general (MOE, 2016b). As a consequence of these improvements, the literacy rate has improved dramatically. While the study of Islam remains at its core, the modern Saudi educational system is said to provide quality education in many fields of study. This is meant to provide for the Kingdom's growing need for a highly educated citizenship. Alongside this intention, there has been growing recognition of the need to inject this quality from the very earliest stages of schooling, i.e. pre-schools, with continuing discussions about what should be included in the curriculum at this and other levels. The following section discusses the KSA's pre-school structure and curriculum.

1.4. Pre-schools in the KSA

Studies have demonstrated that a positive early learning experience can help children's intellectual, social and emotional development (UNICEF, 2013). As a UNICEF document clearly states:

When children's brains are developing most rapidly, the basis for their cognitive, social and emotional development is being formed. A commitment to reducing poverty and increasing the chance of success for all children requires investment in the earliest years
(UNICEF 2013, p.1).

The science of early years tries to maximise the outcomes of the early development that occurs in childhood because this stage is now recognised as a period fundamental to a healthy, happy and productive adulthood (Duncan and Magnuson, 2013). Investing in early years is one of the most efficient investments in human capital that leads to a country's sustainable development and can have a lasting effect on intellectual capacity, personality and social behavior (Duncan and Magnuson, 2013).

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE) (2005), the KSA government first suggested the establishment of childcare for pre-school children in 1986. Five years later, a project was devised for continuing development and growth in the pre-school education sector. The commencement of this project resulted in a defined curriculum that included the following aims: developing the skills of local Saudi staff; determining a universal set of resources and fixed sources of information so as to provide a unified view for all teachers in pre-school education and staff concerned with child issues, thus providing an educational framework; and improving the standard of all groups working with children throughout the Kingdom, so that all nursery children and their mothers could benefit (MOE, 2005). In 2003, the MOE took the decision to separate the pre-school stage from other levels of education and consider it an independent stage. This decision was taken to ensure that each child would achieve his/her targets, and also to improve both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the country's pre-school educational system. By 2014, there were 2559

Ministry of Education (MOE) pre-schools in the KSA, with a well-developed curriculum in place. The following sub-section discusses this.

1.4.1. Pre-school curriculum

The academic year in KSA schools is 40 weeks long and is divided into two semesters. Teaching is undertaken in Arabic, in all school subjects and at all levels; moreover, the early years' curriculum in the KSA has tried to consider each child's needs and abilities. This curriculum, referred to as the Self Learning Curriculum (SLC), was modernised to help pre-school teachers reflect the basics of learning according to the needs of the children (Bahatheq, 2010). The SLC takes into consideration the individual differences between children as a key focus and also pays attention to the total development of the child, thus making the individual child the centre of this approach.

According to Bahatheq (2010), the SLC comprises a basic manual which includes guidance for teachers and contains five components: organisation of the physical environment (indoor and outdoor areas), goals and aims, guidance for the child, daily routine, and preparing the child for primary school. The early years' curriculum consists of six units. The first unit is that of 'developmental stages', lasting two weeks, which provides learning and information about self awareness and difference; this is particularly of interest as it covers some of the issues around disability explored within this thesis. The second unit, entitled 'water,' is run over three weeks and is about water resources and benefits. The third unit is 'sand', about the desert, which runs for three weeks. The fourth unit is about 'food' and runs for three weeks. The fifth unit is 'global housing' and runs for two weeks. Finally, the sixth unit is 'hands', which also runs for two weeks. In combination, a text is used that contains references to family, clothing, friends, health and safety, and books (MOE, 2016)

1.4.2. KSA culture towards disabilities

Children in pre-school education are part of a wider social group within KSA society.

With regard to children with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN) in this context, it has been found that their parents' feelings of responsibility as primary care givers may mean these parents are embarrassed to openly declare the difficulties they may be experiencing with their child, as this would then somehow signify their 'failure' in this position of responsibility (Al-Rubiyea, 2010). Al-Gain and Al-Abdulwahab (2002) concur with this thinking, explaining further that this parental feeling of shame may lead to an overall under-reporting of disability, and also prove an obstacle to research as parents may feel reluctant to take part in any studies involving their children and disability.

This parental shame arguably extends to the broader KSA cultural and pre-school contexts, in which specific provision for children with disabilities has not been clear-cut within pre-schools themselves. Scholars such as Al-Rubiyea (2010) have described the KSA culture as one experiencing difficulties in recognising the needs of children with disabilities. As a result of this, various charities have been established in the country to innovate and develop solutions to issues experienced by this group. For example, the Disabled Children's Association (DCA) in the KSA has undertaken research into and awareness-raising activities about the causes and treatment of children with disabilities. The role of these charities is to establish specialist centres in each area in the KSA in order to provide a comprehensive service for children with disabilities such as medical service in addition to provide training sessions for families, which increase their awareness about dealing with disabilities. Moreover, the charity has 10 branches in the KSA, which work collaboratively to support more than 3000 children with disabilities and their families each year. One of the fundamental roles of this charity is to participate in applying the inclusive education in pre-schools in the KSA by offering advice for families to find suitable pre-schools for their children with disabilities (DCA, 2016). Al-Gain and Al-Abdulwahab (2002) noted some key changes in the education of children with disabilities and the opening of new centres of the KSA Disabled Children's Association. In addition, further development in the active inclusion of children with disabilities can be seen in the MOE's policies and development manuals. In light of this context, this study is significant as it aims to identify why, despite a wider variety of resources available for the education system, issues with inclusive practices for children with disabilities are

still rife within KSA pre-schools. These are described and discussed further in the literature review chapter.

Given that this research explores how the rights of children with disabilities are currently met and how children are included within the educational system, it is therefore necessary to explore how the concept of children's rights has been approached in this research. The following section considers this, focusing on approaches towards the inclusion of children with disabilities from an international rights perspective.

1.5. Children's rights and the UN Convention

In any discussion of the possibilities for the inclusion of children with disabilities in a national and learning context, including Saudi Arabian pre-schools, it is necessary to consider human rights in general. Human rights issues play an essential role in relation to inclusion, whether for children with disabilities alone, or when considering their families, schools, teachers, other children, and the society at large. According to Nickel, "human rights are international norms that help to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses" (2012, p.298). These are moral and legal rights to which all governments are expected to adhere, providing moral guarantees and fundamental public moral norms. They are central to our understanding of how human beings should be treated by each other, and to how our overarching societal structures should safeguard treatment that abides by the agreed moral and legal rights (Fagan, 2005). Given the significance of these rights and the laws that underpin them, compliance with them is often mandatory. They are relevant for all humans and their governments, providing a common basis for the economic, political and social conditions needed to ensure that people lead a good life, transcending local cultural conditions and considerations.

The topic of human rights has been under consideration by many key groups and individuals internationally for several decades; today, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) is considered the primary source of the

modern view of human rights. Since 1948, the UN has also implemented the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1948).

Since its adoption in 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEF, 2012b) has asserted that children all over the world have certain fundamental rights. The UNCRC states the importance of considering the best interests of the child, giving due respect to their views, and protecting them from harm. It stipulates the provision of rights that include the need to survive, to grow, to participate, and to fulfil one's potential, for all children in all countries. One of these universal rights is the right of children to education, as learning and upbringing shape the values of the adults they become (Archard, 2011). Generally, there are arguments for and against a rights agenda for children (Archard, 2004). Some authors argue that children's rights should be included in power relationships and equality frameworks, and not just with respect to protection (John, 2003). Archard (2004) also supports the need for children's rights to be cared about and provided for, and for their best interests to be heard and considered. Children should be legally protected against abuse, neglect and lack of provision of care (Peterson-Badali and Ruck, 2008). The aim of stipulating and realising children's rights is to protect all children, regardless of their religion, race, gender, ability or language (Rajabi-Ardeshiri, 2009).

Reynaert et al. (2009) conducted a review of the academic literature on the UNCRC, exploring how it is being interpreted. They provide evidence that the Convention is serving as a useful framework for children's rights. They identify common themes, including the use of the Convention as a defence for the provision and protection of rights for children. They also assert that there have been improvements in the image of children as autonomous and able to participate in decisions concerning their lives (ibid.). However, there continue to be tensions between the rights of children versus those of their parents, as well as disagreement over how and when the state should intervene. One interesting example of investigation of this conflict is provided by Graham and Fitzgerald (2006), who sought to identify ways to include children in family conflicts, rather than marginalising them. They posit that such an approach

would give children their own voice within the conflict and may result in the creation of more individualised solutions to complex situations

One key area of children's rights that has been recognised internationally is that of the right to education. Bergstrom (2010) claims that since the UNCRC, education has more often been addressed from the perspective of children's rights; however, international law has also tended to allow parents to exercise control, effectively giving them discrete rights, with respect to their children's education. In this way, parents thus become representatives of their children. This has a range of implications, which are further discussed in the literature review. What is important to note here is that, while certain rights applicable to adults (such as making mature, adult choices) are not equally applicable to children, and even though children may not have full personal autonomy rights, they nevertheless still have social rights. This creates tensions, particularly between the rights of children and their parents. While Bergstrom (2010) claims that, in the UN Convention, education is often addressed from a children's rights' viewpoint, international law has tended to allow parents to exercise control, and therefore to have rights with respect to their children's education. He argues that the right to education is sufficiently important that it should be grouped together with the rights of humanity, enlightenment, freedom, equality and fraternity. Moreover, an analysis of the universal right to education, the nature of this education, to whom it is addressed, and for whom it applies suggests that all children should be taught about their rights and laws that relate to them so that they become knowledgeable about them (ibid.).

Indeed, education is a major right that the UNCRC highlights with regard to children, as this combines with their upbringing to later shape them as adults (Archard, 2010). According to Pecora et al., (2012), parents and educators should act in the best interests of their children to facilitate their development into adults who can then flourish and lead good lives. However, the description of this process may be difficult for some societies, as it can be challenging to define good parenting or what even minimal parenting is. The right to an education implies that each society has a duty to provide every child with a means to become educated, whatever their physical or mental ability. Effectively, the failure to educate a child is discriminatory against their basic human rights. The United Nations (UN) General Comment (GC) 13 (The Right

to Education) states that education is “an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities” UN Economic and Social Council (UNECS 13, 1999, p.1). Furthermore, General Comments 13 lists the many positive outcomes of education (see Figure 1).

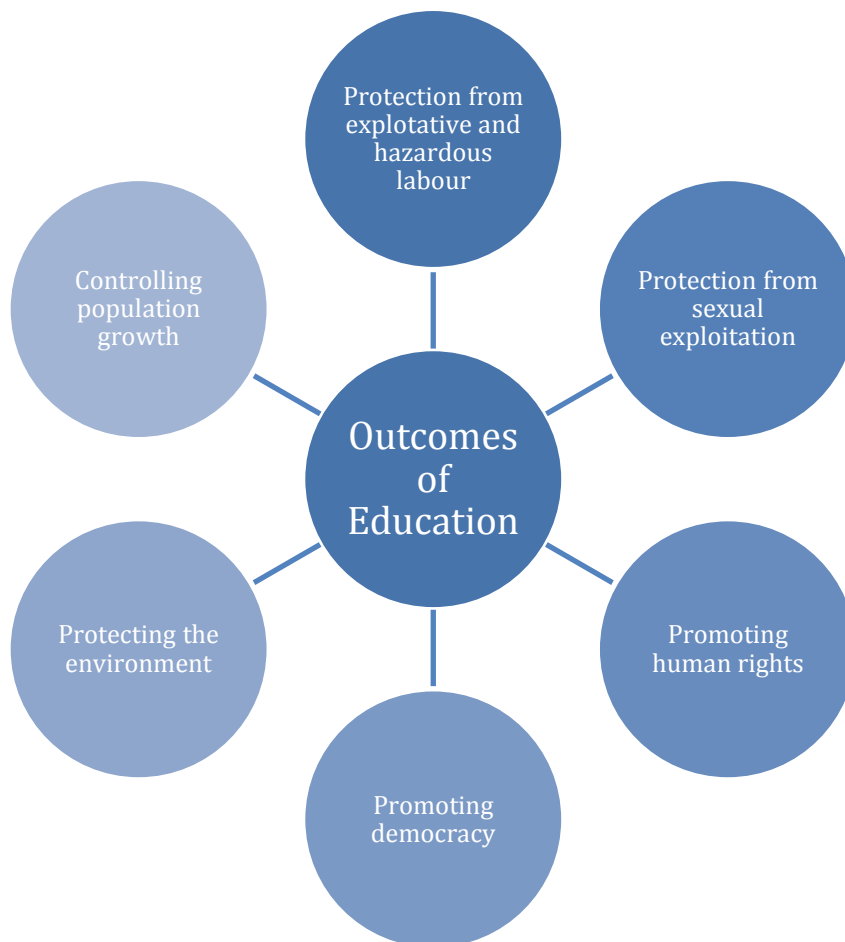


Figure 1: Positive outcomes of education (adapted from UNECS 13, 1999, p.1)

Reynaert et al. (2009) reviewed the functions of the increasingly used ‘standard-setting–implementation–monitoring’ rights in situations such as schools. They assert that these are often applied arbitrarily, with little thought afforded to the differences between societies across the world (ibid.).

Following the broad discussion provided in this section with regard to children's rights, specifically in the context of education, the next section examines the specific rights of children with disabilities in the context of the UN Convention.

1.5.1. The rights and inclusion of children with disabilities under the UN Convention

Disability is often viewed as a social restriction, something which prevents an individual from fulfilling his/her full potential and limits his/her freedom, choice and control over his/her own life. It is often felt that the human rights of individuals with disabilities have been limited and that systematic exclusion has been practiced (Al Thani, 2007). However, it should be emphasised here that defining disability is a complex and controversial matter, and the use of related terms is equally controversial; these aspects are explored in greater depth in the literature review. This section sets the scene for this deeper exploration by examining the UN's approach towards disability, specifically in the context of education and children, and the corresponding drive towards inclusion.

In the last year, UNESCO published their *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016*, which reviews progress towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG4), ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. One topic considered in this report is progress towards education for individuals with disabilities. The report acknowledges that these individuals are some of the most marginalised, and are excluded from good-quality education. SDG4 specifically states that there should be access to education regardless of disability status. The report subsequently notes that in addition to having proper measures for determining progress towards the inclusion of SEN children, there is also the need to improve the preparation of educators and to provide adequate infrastructures so that children with disabilities are not left behind. An assessment of progress in all these areas is needed.

In order to address these challenges, the UN has attempted to provide a universal definition of disability. The UN Convention (UNICEFa, 2012) makes reference to 'children with disabilities'. It suggests that rights for this group should be upheld both by their parents and the broader community, and adequate responsibilities undertaken by the latter to ensure that children with disabilities have an optimum quality of life, consistent with their age and stage of growth. The UN Division for Social Policy and Development Disability, within its Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, includes Article 24 which highlights the right to education. Article 24 includes both the rights of children with disabilities to 'an inclusive education system at all levels' and the obligation of the state to provide it. Although the Article states that inclusive education at all levels should be provided, early years' education is not included as compulsory, as indicated by the following extract:

States Parties shall ensure that: persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability (UN General Assembly, 2006).

In light of this directive governments should, therefore, develop an educational system that is accessible to all abilities across the different levels of schooling, which should be offered free and be compulsory for all. Here, there is an emphasis on equal opportunities, with strong indications that the inclusion of children with disabilities must be present and active. However, research has shown that social and cultural hindrances, and attitudes, can play an active role in preventing children's access to education (CRIN, 2009). Some of these key barriers in the context of the KSA are addressed in this study, based on the understanding that determining any barrier of this kind is needed before change can be implemented.

The 'General Comments Number 9' on the 'Rights of children with disabilities' (CRC, 2006) were set to help members to fulfil their obligations, as well as to encourage international organisations and agencies to achieve children's rights under the UN Convention (CRIN, 2006). The latter section states that children have rights without discrimination, and that there is an obligation to prevent all forms of discrimination, including disability. The document also contains the realisation that discrimination does occur, and that social discrimination leads to marginalisation and

exclusion. Exclusion from education and social services can also eventually impede access to employment (CRC, 2006). The measures to be taken by countries to combat this include ensuring the necessary funding for the adequate training of teachers and other professionals; the provision of guidelines with policies, campaigns, family support, and income maintenance; addressing spiritual, emotional and cultural development, and participation in activities; changes in school practice to achieve positive educational outcomes, such as communication skills, monitoring progress, strengthening self-awareness and respect; and recognising human rights, freedoms and community inclusion (UNHRC, 2006).

In 2011, a UN meeting of experts and advocates to discuss the rights of children with disabilities (Lancourt, 2011) considered topics such as ‘social stigma’ and ‘marginalisation’. The meeting concluded that the focus of action should be on ensuring the inherent right to a life free from discrimination for children with disabilities. They also stressed the importance of granting equal protection and inclusive access to education and full participation, in addition to removing barriers and reducing pressure on the child and their family through greater support and awareness (Lancourt, 2011).

Evidently, the United Nations has been studying inclusive education for a considerable period of time, during which the dominant paradigm of disability has shifted from a medical model to a social and human rights one. Rieser (2013) published a literature review concerning this topic for UNICEF, to study how teachers can be educated to understand and deal with the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms. Rieser (2013) describes how the UNCPRD, and particularly Article 24, includes an obligation for governments to provide education for children with disabilities within an inclusive environment, thus clearly linking the right to education for children with disabilities with the right to an inclusive education as defined by the UN. Rieser’s report provides a basis for a right to inclusion by describing the rationale and philosophy behind it, and how the paradigm shift has led to changes in attitudes towards inclusion. Here, the emphasis is on changing the structures, organisation, learning, curriculum and assessment of society and schools, not on changing children to fit the school. Thus, the current principles guiding change are that all children should have the same access to education; that children learn best

when learning together; that inclusion can help to achieve a recognition and celebration of diversity; and that inclusion can provide for equal participation for all.

Thus the UN adheres to the principle that education should provide empowerment for all and be fully inclusive. However, this research recognises that such a dynamic of empowerment and full inclusion may be difficult to achieve in all cultural contexts. Specifically, as previously mentioned, Islam is the dominant influence shaping societal structures and norms in the KSA. While several aspects of it are, indeed, compatible with the UN Convention's tenets about the rights for children with disabilities, some alternative viewpoints are also very active that may preclude the Convention's definition of empowerment and inclusion for all in this context. In light of this complexity, the current study aims to investigate further the potential tensions resulting from the implementation of inclusion initiatives for children with disabilities in the KSA's pre-schools.

In recognition of the recent findings that children with disabilities are the least likely to attend schools, the UN, through UNICEF, recently produced an extensive report for teachers about how children with disabilities can be educated (Rieser, 2013; Tran et al, 2013; UNICEF, 2013). Similarly, the UNICEF Director of Policy and Practice (2013) has stated the need for more comprehensive and rigid reporting about these children, who are the most stigmatised and excluded of all children, stressing that gaining reliable data about these youngsters must be a priority. The acquisition of such data, within the context of Saudi Arabia, is another primary aim of my study.

Some legislation in the KSA exists concerning the education of pre-school children and children with disabilities. There is also legislation regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education. The aim of the current research is to analyse what is written in Saudi policy concerning the inclusion of pre-school children with disabilities and to determine how this corresponds with the UN rights bases presented by international scholars in this field. The following section provides an overview of current Saudi law in this area, and the driving forces behind it.

1.6. Children's rights in Islam

The term Shariah is derived from the Arabic root, 'Shara'a', denoting “the path to a water hole”; the path, a metaphorical reference to the direction that Muslims take in order to lead a pious life” (Affi and Affi 2014: XVI). Shariah law intends to order the entire range of human activity and to set human life in good order, with the purpose of fostering peaceful living, first with oneself and second within society (Hallaq, 2009).

Since the inception of Islam, human rights and care for the child have been held in high esteem under Shariah law (Roberts, 2003). These laws were implemented during the bygone era in response to the common practice in pre-Islamic culture among Arabs of 'burying one's daughter alive due to the 'shame 'that she brought on the family. Sons during this time were not subjected to this type of treatment due to the honour they brought to the family (Nimry, 2009). This stark contrast between pre-Islamic culture and post-Islamic Arabia demonstrates the great importance given to the rights of children, regardless of gender (Rajabi-Ardeshiri, 2009), by the religion of Islam. Following the establishment of Islam, all Muslim were taught to value and care for children of both genders equally, entitling them to the rights of care, food, education and family life, as well as to be taught manners and morals. The precepts of Shariah (Islamic) law thus promote gender equality, and encourage the raising of children with the utmost care and generosity (see Appendix 1) (Al-Otaibi, 2008).

These rights correlate today with those laid down by the UNCRC, as discussed in the previous section. In comparison with the UN children's rights article, the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990), Article 9, is similar in that it underlines the importance of the responsibility of governments to provide education for all, whether the children are female or male, talented, or with disabilities. This is as a result of the core tenet of Islam being justice for all. Consequently, the rights for children in Islamic countries are governed by the laws laid down over 1400 years ago, which are mirrored in the West via legislation and international principles, such as the UNCRC.

Prior to the establishment of the UNCRC, UNICEF commissioned a study to identify the standards of rights for children in many countries. The results of this study were

then discussed with Islamic experts at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1985 (Volkman, 2009). At this meeting, congruencies were found between Islam and international rights standards, based upon the statements on this subject found in the Qur'an and other religious sources. Indeed, Rajabi-Ardeshiri (2009) states that most Islamic countries claim to be implementing laws based on a framework of children's rights constructed both according to Shariah law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Volkman (2009) argue that religious leaders can be important in influencing societies with large numbers of believers and, therefore, encourages further discussion with Islamic thinkers regarding the rights of children. This demonstrates a degree of convergence between Islam and the concepts of the UN on the topic of children's rights. However, this is a topic for future specific examination, as the details of this area are beyond the scope of this thesis and would benefit from further research. [Please see Appendix one for more details about Islam and Shariah law.] There are also precepts for how to treat others and include them within society, including individuals with disabilities. This topic is discussed clearly in relation to the chapters of the Qur'an.

Given the above described convergence, if countries like the KSA are to ensure the right to have equal opportunities for all their citizens, then both the UN declarations and Shariah law can be used as instruments for change. Traditionally, in Saudi Arabia there has been little emphasis on education and great discrimination has existed between the sexes (Manna, 2006). However, through Shariah law, Islam has promoted gender equality and the raising of all children fairly (Al-Otaibi, 2008). Despite this, certain discontinuities between these laws and the reality of the everyday lives of children with disabilities still exist in Islamic countries such as the KSA. The following section discusses some of these disconnects in greater detail.

1.7. The KSA and the rights of children with disabilities to an inclusive education

The situation in the KSA is based on Shariah law which states that all people are equal and should be treated equally in a fair manner. However, despite this legal and religious position, many individuals with disabilities are ignored, or are considered to

be a source of shame and/or a burden (Al Thani, 2007). This treatment can prevent individuals from fully understanding and accessing their legal rights (Alquraini, 2010). Individuals with disabilities may also be legally disadvantaged, such as with regard to their rights to live independently. The situation for children with disabilities is also often far from ideal, with many denied equal access to education as detailed in the previous section, and according to Islamic and Saudi policy (Alquraini, 2010).

According to the last report from UN committee in October 2016 in the light of article 23 of the Convention and of general comment No. 9 (2006) on the rights of children with disabilities in Saudi and given the fact that the vast majority of children with disabilities continue to receive education. The UN Committee recommends that the State party in KSA adopt and promote a social and human rights-based approach to disability as suggested by the following extract;

“The State party should set up a comprehensive policy to develop inclusive education and ensure that inclusive education is given priority over the placement of children in specialized institutions, while paying particular attention to children with mental and multiple disabilities”. (CRC, 2016) (CRC/C/SAU/CO/3.p 9)

While attention has been paid to the rights of Saudi children with disabilities, according to Alquraini (2010) some Saudi parents think that such children only need physical comforts, despite Islam emphasising the importance of knowing and understanding the Qur'an, in addition to the importance of possessing knowledge on how to be a good Muslim. Al Thani (2007) stated that most children with disabilities in Islamic Arab countries are not integrated into the mainstream educational system; schools have not been made accessible; and teacher training in special education is also often relatively scarce. In general, accessibility and resources limit the education of children with disabilities in Islamic Arabic countries, although efforts are being made to improve this capacity (Al Thani, 2007). For example, in the KSA, while there is a shortage of research on the provision for children with disabilities in Saudi schools, research to date indicates that this provision currently seems to be restricted to specialist institutions. In addition, the programmes devised for children with disabilities emphasise physical rehabilitation as opposed to more comprehensively meeting the educational needs of children (Al-Melaik, 2001).

Moreover, many children with disabilities in the KSA do not enter school until the age of eight, even though delays in entry may be counterproductive to their progress (Groce, 1999). On some occasions, parents choose to defer entry to allow for intensive targeted therapy and/or treatment (Groce, 1999). They may also feel that late entry will help to minimise damage to their children's self-esteem and confidence, perhaps because they will have less chance of being singled out. In this study, I conducted extensive interviews with parents of children with disabilities in order to explore parents' perceptions of disability and their children's educational needs. If, as Groce (1999) argues, the lives of the children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia are often limited by society and not by the disability itself, then this needs to be addressed.

Hadidi and Al Khateeb (2015) have identified the difficulties faced by individuals with disabilities in Islamic Arab countries as a deficiency of resources, a lack of self-determination, and a society that views them to be a burden that should be hidden away. It is, therefore, crucial to determine how the KSA government and society unnecessarily limit individuals with disabilities, and prevent their access to equality of opportunity.

Although the nature of Saudi Arabian society may be an obstacle to the implementation of full inclusion, the government has taken steps towards inclusion; this may, however, have resulted in tensions between society and the state. For example, Hadidi and Al Khateeb (2015) argue that although Islamic Arab states have laws and conventions for SEN children, they are written in overly generalised terms, thus making them difficult to implement and enforce. While it cannot be said with certainty that this is the case with regard to the KSA's early years' educational provision, my research is interested in investigating whether the lack of specified codes of practice for the implementation of inclusion results in SEN children not receiving appropriate pre-school education. With the current study, I am also interested in finding out the concrete ways in which inclusion is realised for children with disabilities.

Concrete evidence of the KSA's progress in the area of inclusion for children with disabilities has been highlighted in some studies, including Al Shahrani's research that observes the

mainstreaming' or inclusion programmes that have been launched, including "resource rooms, clinical psychology and speech therapy, consultants and itinerant teachers," as well as the physical inclusion of "SEN students who were not served before 1996, such as those from remote, rural, suburban and coastal areas (2014, p.41).

However, despite the fact that KSA state policy is deeply rooted in and pledges to adhere both to the UNCRC and educational policy based on Islam – both of which uphold the principle of equal access to education for children with disabilities — empirical research (e.g., Al Mouter, 2013; Al Rubiyea, 2010) have shown that children with disabilities are frequently marginalised and denied their rights to participate in education. Consequently, I seek to explore this discrepancy between policy and practice in greater detail, in the context of the KSA.

In summary, children with disabilities have rights, including a right to education. The government of the KSA is expected to ensure that these educational opportunities are in place. The UNCRC holds that the minimum standard is that primary education is free, with the government allocating sufficient resources to ensure this for all children (UNICEF, 2012b). To date, however, only limited research has investigated how best to provide pre-school education for all children in the KSA, including children with disabilities (Al-Faiz, 2006; Alquraini, 2010; Al Rubiyea, 2010). It is hoped that the present research can contribute further insights on this issue.

1.8. General definitions of key terms

One of the main complexities of researching questions of inclusion relates to the multitude of terms used to identify and define the issues at stake. It is, therefore, important to provide working definitions of the key terms used in the context of this thesis.

As previously mentioned, defining disability is a challenging undertaking as there is no universal consensus about this concept. According to the World Health Organisation,

disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions... Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives (WHOa, 2012, p.1).

Its very complexity underlines the importance of considering the terms used to describe it very carefully, as they can be labels with negative connotations. The question of discrimination is therefore important, as is its oppositional force inclusion.

Providing a clear definition of SEN is also problematic. The introduction of the term refers back to 1978 Warnock Report, which assumes that up to one child in five is likely to require special educational provision at some point during his or her school career. This means that this child may require special educational provision at any given time. Remaining children will be unlikely to have such a long-term disability or disorder. Their learning difficulties, which may last for varying periods of time, will stem from a variety of causes. Thus, the Warnock Report refers to the group of children — up to one in five — who are likely to require some form of special educational provision at some time during their school career as “children with special educational needs”. (Warnock Report, 1978)

The current definition of SEN, which refers back to the Warnock Report, specifies that *“A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her”* (DfES , 2014b, P 15)

Moreover, a young person or a child of compulsory school age has a disability or learning difficulty if the child has a significant difficulty in learning comparing with other children in the same age group, and this difficulty hinders or prevents him or her from using the facilities, which are provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools, including post-16 settings (DfES , 2014b). This definition has been widely adopted not only in the UK, but also in most countries in the world. Currently, SEN

refers to the Code of Practice 2014. The original definition clarifies that SEN arises as result of personal, individual characteristic of the child in relation to her/his school environment. A multitude of factors may result in a special educational need at any point of the school career of a child. Given the widespread use of the term SEN and its significance internationally, I have decided to adopt this term in my study.

This research examines Saudi Arabian policy towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in early years' education, and the extent to which this is realised in practice. As such, the Saudi Arabian definition of disability was first examined. In the KSA, an individual with disabilities is defined under the Labor and Workman Law (Article 51) as "any person whose capacity to perform and maintain a suitable job has actually diminished as a result of a physical or mental infirmity." This is clearly aimed at adults and thus has limited application in the context of this research. However, in the KSA, there is no clear definition of children with disabilities in particular. Conversely, Wall defined Special Educational Needs (SEN) as "any difficulties experienced by a child requiring additional or different educational provision to be made" (2014, p.xiv), and this definition can be used directly in the context of early years' education in Saudi Arabia. This definition may result in a move away from the more medical view, which uses medical diagnoses to categorise needs, to a more social view. In Saudi Arabia, the document by Al Mousa (2010) categorises children in line with their medical diagnoses. However, alternative views have also been found in the research in the field, such as Al Shahrani's thesis on Saudi educators' views of inclusion initiatives for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Instead of either a medical model or social model of disability and identification of attendant understandings of inclusion, Al Sharrani found

a new conception of educators' understandings of and attitudes towards DHH inclusion, which cannot be labelled as reflecting either the deficit or the social model but rather an integrated medical/social conceptualisation of D/deafness and DHH students, because their responses were interactive (2014, p.338).

I have chosen to use the terms 'children with disabilities' and 'SEN' children. These terms have been combined as the focus of this research is on children who have special educational needs as a result of their disabilities. Moreover, the employed terms may be seen as appropriate given that 'children with disabilities' is widely

utilised in the UN Convention and Saudi policy, while 'SEN' is used within educational research and by practitioners in the field.

With regard to inclusion in early years' provision within Saudi Arabia, within mainstream schools this has been defined in the Document of Rules and Regulations for Special Education Institutes and Programs in 2001 as Inclusive Schools, which is further clarified as follows: "inclusion, operationally, means educating children with special educational needs in regular education schools, and providing them with special education services" (MOE, 2016a, p.8). Al Mousa (2010, p.26) breaks this down into partial and full inclusion according to the children's needs. However, even though this is helpful in understanding how inclusion may be approached, it is still important to understand the needs of the individual child as to how inclusion needs to happen; this is discussed further in the literature review chapter.

1.9. Contribution to knowledge

Given that Islam is central to all Saudi policies, the concepts of equality and rights in Islam have been and will continue to be emphasised in the education policy of the Saudi government. There is an argument that Saudi policy should also include such concepts as social justice, capacity building and inclusion, as discussed by Tikly and Barrett (2011) and Warnock and Norwich (2010). As a Saudi citizen and parent, I support this view. The Saudi government asserts that it has considered the education of all children, including children with disabilities. Along with the policy changes that should be made in Saudi Arabia, Al Thani (2007) argues that the effectiveness of inclusive education requires changes to be made in the training delivered to pre-school practitioners, so that they can bring about this inclusive education. Studies from other countries have illustrated that training pre-school practitioners in inclusive practices can be instrumental in ensuring that substantial change is achieved (Khochen and Radford, 2012). However, there is currently a dearth of research as to how such inclusion initiatives are being realised in the KSA pre-schools. My research aims to contribute new knowledge to this gap by, firstly, providing an overall exploration of the ways in which the rights of children with disabilities are being met

in an inclusive manner in the KSA. The research then examines the gaps between policy and practice. Finally, suggestions are provided as to how the identified obstacles to inclusion in pre-schools could be potentially overcome.

As evident from the discussion in this section, my contribution to knowledge with this thesis aims to be twofold, i.e. in relation to both theoretical and applied spheres of knowledge. Firstly, concerning theory, there is a lack of specific theory relating to the inclusion of children with disabilities in pre-schools in the context of the KSA. As such, my thesis will provide a valuable contribution to the current literature.

These study aims are enabled by the fact that, at present in the KSA, some early interventions are available for children with disabilities. However, these services are yet to be developed fully and accessed by all (Merza, 2012). This may be due to lack of awareness among parents and families, or even due to cultural issues. Perhaps one reason for the relative lack of use of early intervention services is the role that large families play within Saudi culture in helping to care for children with disabilities (Merza, 2012). However, there is little accurate literature highlighting what is being done and the resultant degree of success, particularly in topics such as inclusion in pre-schools (Bin Obaid, 2009). In fact, a recent government report (MOE, 2014) again dealt with inclusion, showing relatively little progress since 2008. For example, in 2008 it was stated that classes including children with disabilities should not exceed 25 children; however, this situation has not been rectified and the Ministry of Education has accepted a degree of responsibility for failures in this area. Such gaps between policy and practice are precisely what are examined in depth in this thesis.

The fact remains that relatively few children in Saudi Arabia attend any form of pre-school education (MOE, 2012), a situation that the country needs to address. Pre-school education is considered critical for school success and even national prosperity (Cox and Raikes, 2015). The government in Saudi Arabia should, therefore, address the general shortage of pre-school education. With respect to children with disabilities, the situation is even more pronounced, and I hope that this research will contribute towards the process of initiating radical change towards more widespread and meaningful inclusion in pre-school education.

A radical change in the KSA's early years' educational provision would affect a variety of stakeholders. According to Frederickson and Cline (2002), when dealing with children with disabilities, the individual perspectives of all key stakeholders need to be considered so that an interactional and integrated approach can be taken for children. Satisfied stakeholders in special education, according to Webster (2016), are those who have something at stake in special education; that is, the parties with claims, including the parents and the child, educators and administrators, and the community. Therefore, the support of all stakeholders is needed for the appropriate and successful upbringing of children with disabilities. There are questions in the KSA concerning the consideration of stakeholders' views in SEN education, and also the possibility of integrating all stakeholders into successful programmes. In light of this, one of the key functions of my research is to discover which stakeholders are involved in the education of pre-school SEN children in Saudi Arabia, and the ways in which they are included, thus creating new knowledge in this area.

In an applied context, my thesis will make a useful contribution to a range of stakeholders. Firstly, I aim to inform the parents of SEN children about the current practices being enacted with regard to the inclusion of their children in pre-schools, and increase their awareness relating to both the possibilities of inclusion as well as the current limitations of the system. Consequently, this understanding may benefit SEN children to be better included in pre-schools.

Secondly, I engage with staff in the general education system through my exploration of staff attitudes towards SEN children. This is done in order to shed light on the practices of the current educational system and how these could be improved. In turn, a deeper understanding of staff attitudes may contribute towards positive changes for SEN children in pre-school education.

Thirdly, by providing an in-depth analysis of the benefits as well as shortcomings of the current educational system, it is hoped that policy makers can utilise the findings to improve a range of issues, which are outlined in my findings and recommendations.

In terms of methodological contribution this research sets out to determine the key differences between what has been written, what is currently being said, and what the

reality is. I employ standard social science techniques, such as triangulation of findings, to reach valid conclusions. I have attempted to record all incidences of good practice in the field, so that elements that positively contribute to the inclusion of children with disabilities in Saudi mainstream pre-school situations can be placed within an overall educational framework and then be widely disseminated.

1.10. Structure of the thesis

Chapter One: Introduction. This chapter presents the background to the research about children's rights and inclusion, and introduces the current status of the KSA educational system including pre-schools. In addition, it gives a brief introduction to the study's contribution to knowledge, defines the key terms used in the thesis, and states the research questions under investigation.

Chapter Two: Theories and policies of inclusion. In this chapter, I focus on theories and policies of inclusion, their practical applications, and the attendant controversies. I lay out the key approaches taken towards inclusion, and the rationale for the particular one adopted in the current study, the *human rights approach* (Tikly and Barrett, 2011), which is of particular relevance in a Saudi context and which, in turn, informs later analysis and findings. In this section, I also consider SEN policy in early years, specifically in the KSA, and discuss integration and inclusion with a consideration of the medical and social models of inclusion, as they underpin the approaches to inclusion.

Chapter Three: Research methods. This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted in this research. I present the rationale of using the case study as the research method. I also explicate how the study gathers a wealth of empirical data through the use of documentary analysis, questionnaires, interviews, and observations, and discuss how these data were then triangulated and analysed.

Chapter Four: Findings. This chapter presents the findings. I provide an analysis of the collected quantitative and qualitative data, looking at the specific findings from

each of the chosen methodological approaches (documentary analysis, interviews, questionnaires and observations). The triangulation of the methods leads to an examination of how the evidence aligns with the UN Conventions, Islamic Shariah law and Saudi policy. Overall, it seems evident that a major gap exists between policy and practice with regard to a broad range of aspects, such as pre-school facilities. The lack of knowledge among staff with regard to UN policies is also apparent, highlighting a stark contrast to their deep understanding of Saudi policies.

Chapter Five: Discussion. In this chapter I review the main findings of the study, relating them back to the research questions particularly in relation to theoretical considerations and the literature. I undertake an in-depth discussion on the extent to which Saudi pre-schools are effectively meeting the needs of children with disabilities under the umbrella of the UN Convention and Saudi policy, supported by the perspectives of parents and educational professionals. Particular attention is drawn to the fact that, while some aspects of both Shariah law and the UN Convention have been met, there is scope for further improvement in many regards, such as the goal of consistently providing an appropriate learning environment in which children with disabilities can flourish. Consequently, this chapter not only highlights the gaps between policy and practice but further provides a number of focused, practical implications of these findings, offering suggestions for ways in which the identified obstacles may be overcome.

Chapter Six: Conclusion. The final section of this thesis presents the main conclusions concerning the research questions. It is evident that while policies are clearly written, they are not always followed as required. There are plenty of opportunities for the Saudi government to improve inclusion in pre-schools, and this thesis endeavours to offer some further suggestions towards this goal. I conclude with a discussion of the study's limitations and suggestions for future research in this field.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the concept of inclusion and so reviews a range of theoretical approaches and practical applications in addition to their attendant controversies. Given the aims of this study, particular focus is given to the investigation of these issues in the context of the KSA.

I explore theories of inclusion from various perspectives in order to elucidate its benefits and its potential outcomes. I start with a discussion of possible approaches to inclusion as a concept, as well as its underpinning constructs, in terms of sociological positions, human rights and social justice. Inclusive practices continue to be of interest with respect to the education of children with disabilities. As a concept it has various interpretations; I focus on a more general understanding: i.e. could current inclusion policies in the KSA be improved to embrace children's differences and, if so, to what extent?

I discuss the conceptualisation of inclusion and exclusion, and clarify the development of social inclusion in practice. Then, the differences between the terms integration and inclusion are presented. What follows is a discussion of disability based on both social and medical models, operational aspects of SEN, and a critique of SEN.

I then apply inclusion to early years' education, and review the controversies this attracts. Inclusion in practice requires good-quality teaching; for this I explore pedagogical models of inclusive practices. Finally, I investigate the KSA policies concerned with SEN and inclusion, in order to understand the attitudes and implementation of the rights of individual children with disabilities in the country. Thus, in the following section, I will discuss a number of approaches relevant to this study which offer constructs of equality and the rights to inclusion for children with disabilities.

2.2. Theories of inclusion

Sociologists have suggested that it is society that disables physically impaired individuals (Oliver, 1995), rather than their impairment alone, so that they tend to be isolated and excluded from much of what happens in the general society. A number of approaches have been applied towards the definition of disability and how it can be modified: these include the human capital approach (Tikly and Barrett, 2011), the human rights approach (Tikly and Barrett, 2011), the capability approach (Sen, 1999), and the United Nations international classification of functioning (WHO, 2012b). In this research, I pay special attention to the human rights approach, because I accept that the right to education and the benefits derived from education should be a human right assured for each individual. In particular, the human rights approach tends to focus on child-centred learning, an issue highly relevant for children with disabilities.

I also give due consideration to Sen's (1999) social justice and capabilities approach, through which it is possible to use the notions of well-being, freedom and practical opportunities as means of assessing the quality of pre-school education for children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. In particular, the capability approach sets achievement of an appropriate state of functioning as an aim of education for all (Sen, 1999). In other words, each individual should have available effective, genuine opportunities to lead the life that they value, and they should enjoy their rights without discrimination, as laid out in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 2012). This approach also stipulates that each individual with disabilities should have the freedom to develop, while still having the inherent demands of their individual challenges addressed. This is relevant in the KSA, as children with disabilities may not be able to achieve a productive, and fulfilled life, even though there may be wealth and resources available.

There are different approaches to the philosophy behind inclusive practices and outcomes, and an understanding of these can provide support for change. In order to better understand how inclusive education should theoretically function and how its quality can be improved, Tikly and Barrett (2011) recently outlined and discussed the many theoretical and philosophical approaches that have been and are still being used. Important questions they examined include why children should be educated, how the

quality of their education can be assessed, and why all children, including children with disabilities, should be considered. The three main approaches to the topic of inclusion they discuss are the human rights approach, the social justice and capabilities approach, and the human capital approach. These are discussed in turn below.

2.2.1. The human rights approach

The human rights approach is important with respect to education; however, it does not really consider or emphasise economic growth (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Basic human rights should ensure that all individuals have the right to education and its incumbent benefits. Education should involve a range of positive human rights, such as development of the individual, the provision of equal access, and equality of opportunity for all. In addition, education should impede negative actions against the individual; for example, securing freedom from abuse.

The human rights approach to education tends to be linked with child-centred learning. Two quality frameworks based on a rights approach for all children are the Global Campaign for Education (World Bank, 2011) used by UNICEF, and the framework that Pigozzi (2000; 2008) developed for UNESCO. In these, the individual child is central, the focus being on prioritising and meeting their needs. The frameworks also state that the education system should find all children, provide suitable learning environments, determine what the children need, and consider what is taught and how it is conveyed to children. These priorities appear particularly relevant for SEN children. Pigozzi (2008) expects the education system to provide an evaluation of each school's policy and administration, and have a scheme for measuring quality, at both learner and system levels.

In principle, through using the human rights approach, the education system should be child-friendly, providing basic education and helping children face challenges and become healthier and safer (Tikly and Barrett, 2011). Teachers and other adults would be expected to help, with the school taking an inclusive stance and helping all children who enrol. All decisions would be made democratically, even consulting the children, so that children would become active agents of their education. Such

education theoretically would be inclusive, have relevance and be democratic. Despite this, certain difficulties have been noted in the human rights approach, such as the decision about which rights are the most important and the optimal way for these to be met (ibid.). In reality, children do not have as many rights as adults (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010), and they are also not completely free. Nevertheless, the approach has a great deal to offer, particularly due to the fact that, through its use, the individual child is positioned at the centre of educational policy.

The human rights approach presents inherent challenges to educators who have to secure the rights of children with disabilities alongside mainstream children. Nevertheless, I adopted this approach in my study because it endorses a view of quality of education, based on the complete fulfilment of the needs of all children, including children with disabilities; it also supports the view that each child should have full and equal rights to education, and that the way that these equal rights are enacted is a matter of policy. As such, it can at best shed light on whether, and if so, how the rights of children with disabilities are being met in the KSA.

2.2.2. The social justice and capabilities approach

The second approach that I discuss is the social justice and capabilities approach, which was primarily developed by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2003). Tikly and Barrett (2011) state that it is only this approach which offers a framework suited to the politics of education. Education should produce outcomes that are valued by both individuals and also by their society. This means that the processes which can produce desired outcomes should be clearly defined by the state, by educators, and by society as a whole. Thus this approach does not position the individual child at the centre.

Tikly and Barrett (2011) explain that the dimensions of social justice are *redistribution*, which describes the children's ability to access excellent provision; *recognition*, which is the acknowledgement that special groups should have access; and *participation*, which is the right to be heard and listened to. These three elements are crucial in fulfilling the rights and meeting the needs of children with disabilities in the KSA. In their absence, society need not recognise and respect participation from certain individuals, for example, children with disabilities, thus denying them their

right to an education. Democracy should seek to remove barriers and give all individuals an equal say, which should enable the removal of institutional and informal barriers and obstacles.

With respect to education, social justice can be defined as a means by which the inherent capabilities of each individual can be converted into ‘functionings’ (Sen, 1999). In other words, *the potential to achieve should lead to achievement*. Each individual then becomes the main agent for their own development, and in order to do this they need to be free. They need access to appropriate capacity inputs and opportunities to convert these into ‘functionings’ in order for justice to develop. The social justice theory incorporates aspects of both human capital theory (input of opportunities into ‘functionings’) and human rights theory (the intrinsic right to be educated). According to social justice approaches, education should provide knowledge and empowerment, which together enable individuals to make their own choices. This approach includes a rights-based approach; however it states more clearly what a society expects to be provided, how to assess outcomes, and how to determine whether the education is of good quality.

Nussbaum (2003) gives ten basic capabilities that allow an individual to live life with dignity: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, using one’s senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one’s environment. Whereas Nussbaum believes that these are permanent universal entitlements, Sen (1999) situates entitlements in context, with the effect that developing ‘functionings’ can depend upon individual characteristics as well as wider social power situations and inequalities. This is a more realistic approach when considering the education of pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA, given the potentially varied nature of each disability and the attitudes of the state towards the education of children. Therefore it is of use in my research, although it does not invalidate the human rights approach.

McCowan (2011) uses the capabilities approach to discuss the inherent advantages and limitations of using a universal entitlement to education. This approach allows for the universal right to education and the heterogeneity of the child population, as well as the prevention of excess state interference in education (McCowan, 2011).

However, he also notes limitations to the capabilities approach; for example he cites the case of children in a poor society, where finance for education can be limiting. Therefore, he suggests a combination of a capability approach and a human rights framework, which is able to recognise the elements of a basic rights threshold for all children, in conjunction with the need to identify duty bearers for specific rights domains. This is an approach that seems to be appropriate for the KSA. In addition, the KSA has a significant budget allocated for education and a further budget that has been explicitly established for including SEN children in the educational system; thus the limitation noted above should not affect the country's education system (MOF, 2015).

Tikly and Barrett (2011) define three dimensions of good education from a social justice perspective: relevance, democratic participation and inclusion. The first of these dimensions, relevance, is concerned with whether different groups are receiving the education they need and value, and includes the needs of children with disabilities. According to Tikly and Barrett, although cognitive skills are important, many more capabilities need to be considered (2011). Education should not be a privilege for a selected few, as it is relevant for all, no matter what their backgrounds or capabilities are. With respect to democracy all individuals should have a voice, including individuals with disabilities, and there should therefore be strategies within education to improve citizenship. Within a democratic education system, individuals should be educated to achieve their highest potential, whether to serve as leaders or members of a democratic community. This goes beyond what human capital or human rights theories offer. An inclusive education can offer relevance and provide greater democratic participation. In my research, the relevance of current education in KSA pre-schools for children with disabilities is questioned, as is the degree to which these children and their parents have a voice in their education. Another consideration of great significance in the study is whether or not inclusion is present and, if it is, whether it is actively supporting relevance and democratic participation.

In summary, as outlined above, my study predominately adopts a human rights approach, with a focus on the actual enactments of these rights in a real-world context. However, additionally, the social justice and capabilities approach is also relevant, as the KSA is not a poor country where human capital alone needs to be the

main objective of education. The approaches I have selected allow me to explore and analyse the education received by pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA.

2.2.3. The human capital approach

The human capital approach continues to be used today, particularly in poor countries where there is a drive for economic growth (Tikly and Barrett, 2011; Ball, 2013). This approach argues that education can contribute to economic growth and so there are strong reasons for investment in this area. This means that education can compete with other investments, and that the assessment of educational quantity and quality can determine where to invest resources. However, this approach limits the ability to consider true educational quality. It involves school effectiveness frameworks, and determining inputs (financial and material) and outputs: but if there is no work for the educated, then education may not reduce poverty, nor lead to greater equality, nor establish economic growth. Nevertheless, Tikly and Barrett (2011) believe that this approach can still be useful in improving educational provision, by setting minimum standards for physical resources and teacher capabilities. It can also be employed to determine whether children are able to learn. Ball (2013) has described the human capital theory in order to analyse the present UK education system and subsequently proposed radical changes. For example, educational provision should involve mutualism, democratic accountability and co-production, where schools have an educative relationship with their communities, and where education is central for all stakeholders. Although there are risks and costs involved when considering human capital, the risks of *not* trying are greater for individuals and for society. Moreover, this approach can show whether sufficient attention is being paid to particular sectors of the community. Biddle (2010) successfully used the human capital approach when analysing the educational opportunities of aborigines in Australia.

Even though there may be some economic gains in including individuals with disabilities in education, these should not be the main advantages of inclusion, and are typically not so. Therefore the human capital approach cannot be considered as the most appropriate approach for my research. This is particularly the case when considering the education of children with disabilities, since the gains may be more

socially than economically orientated. Moreover, in general, this approach utilises standardised assessments of success, often relying on cognition only, with little qualitative assessment, and the difficulties are compounded when considering different kinds of education. This is unacceptable when assessing the education of children with disabilities. Despite all of these negative aspects, most governments accept the basic tenets of the human capital approach and are therefore at least theoretically willing to provide a quality education for all, as laid out in the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000).

In conclusion, I have elected to accept a largely human rights approach towards the education of pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA; however, this does not mean I reject completely the other approaches. For example, the social justice and capabilities approach can be useful when assessing what educational provision the government has put in place, and the human capital approach can show whether the education of these children would be useful to the society as a whole. In the next section the concepts of inclusion and exclusion are discussed.

2.3. Concepts of inclusion/exclusion

The concept of inclusion in education has been studied by many researchers (e.g., Nutbrown and Clough, 2006; Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Some offer a generic definition – e.g., that which allows children *with* disabilities to study within the same environment of children *without* disabilities (Benjamin et al., 2003), Ainscow et al. (2006) offer a more precise definition; that inclusion involves total restructuring of school systems to respond to the diversity of children in each locality. However, inclusion is seen as a never-ending process (Ainscow et al., 2006). Research has generally concluded that inclusion can be successful when SEN children attend classes with other peers where they can acquire social and cognitive skills more easily. The adaptation of mainstream classrooms to inclusion allows children with disabilities to study together with children without disabilities, so that both groups can enjoy positive social and academic outcomes (Al Anazy, 2012).

According to the UK Equality Act (2010), children with disabilities must have equal rights to those of children without disabilities. The implications of inclusion include

both positive and negative outcomes. A positive outcome is that children with disabilities are no longer expected to attend special schools with special classrooms; here their progress can be limited and often hindered (Whitbread, 2005). Moreover, children with disabilities were previously unable to succeed within the larger social community (Baker et al., 2014) – inclusion allows these children to socialise with others regardless of disability so that they can participate and learn new things collectively in interactive environments. The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (2009:2) defines inclusion in early childhood more specifically, noting the provision of ‘the values, policies and practices that support the rights of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability’.

There are however dissenting opinions which support exclusion. For example, according to Trop et al., (2014), exclusion is where children with disabilities are not expected to attend mainstream schools, specifically because their disabilities can affect the other children within a class. Children with disabilities are instead expected to attend special education institutes, which will accommodate their special needs and provide a highly differentiated programme that helps them to improve academically (Education Law Center, 2010). Subsequently it could be argued that exclusion from mainstream education, in the form of provision in special settings, would provide a better education for children with disabilities. Although there may be the risk that special schools can isolate children with disabilities from their wider social environment, the familiarity provided by a consistent close-knit community could also have positive influences on children with disabilities (Thomas, 2013). For instance, if a mainstream teacher is unable to show value to a child with disability then this could have long-term negative impacts on a child, particularly with respect to self-esteem (Phtakia, 2005; Lampton et al., 2012; Efthymiou, 2013).

Moreover, in SEN classrooms, the children study together without the presence of more highly skilled peers with whom to compare themselves. Although this may improve their learning, on the other hand it provides them with only limited opportunities to observe models which can improve their cognitive and behavioural skills (Quinn et al., 2002). Thus there is a dilemma between inclusion and its counter concept, exclusion – is it more important to satisfy the educational needs of SEN

children by providing more personalised individual educational provision in special schools, or is there a more important aim to enhance a sense of belonging and generate acceptance from others in mainstream education? These divergent outcomes continue to influence the thinking about educational provision of SEN children, particularly as it is accepted that there is a need to uphold the right of access to education for every child.

Based on the above debate, inclusive practices in mainstream schools can generate familiarity between children with and without disabilities, and this familiarity can help to break social barriers from an early age. This contributes to the development of social and cognitive skills for SEN children and helps them to build quality relationships throughout their lives.

In my research, I expect to discover that true inclusion in pre-schools in the KSA is still not being practiced and there are gaps between policy and practice. I aim to examine the extent of this gap and how to bridge this gap by suggesting solutions.

2.3.1. Development of social inclusion

The development of the concept of social inclusion was considered first in France in the 1970s; later, in the 1980s, the European Union adopted this concept. In the UK in 1997 a progressive, social policy towards inclusion was published by the UK government (Norwich, 2013). Social inclusion is defined as being the opposite of social exclusion where, in the case of the latter, all individuals are blocked from access to resources, opportunities and rights in their communities. Hence any decrease in social exclusion can lead to varying levels of social inclusion. Therefore, this recognition of social inclusion as opposed to social exclusion is a concept with an unspecified positive nature (Norwich, 2013). Wright and Stickley (2013) also considers that social exclusion implies the exclusion of children with disabilities from society, and one aim of an inclusive society is to provide equal opportunities for every individual including children, no matter what class they belong to, so that all children can lead quality lives. His view not only focuses on class structures, but also takes into account children with disabilities. For instance, social inclusion should allow for employment opportunities, educational benefits, and support programmes leading to

inclusion. Within the KSA, social inclusion would enable children with disabilities to become fully participating members of their society with their own rights maintained (Alanazi, 2012). This means not only providing access to education, but also ensuring that there are opportunities for widening social participation in the society.

This development in the concept of social inclusion as laid down gradually attracted the attention of the education sector, and led to the consideration of inclusive educational provision for SEN children (Wright and Stickley, 2013). The development of social inclusion in education has allowed all children to be treated equally and to be provided with interactive teaching environments where skills and capabilities can be enhanced and relationship gaps can be bridged. Consequently social inclusion results in constructing a specific image of who a child is, regardless of his/her disabilities.

According to Polat (2011) a quality education, provided by an education sector, is at the heart of the concept of inclusion. Inclusion should allow children to participate in academic activities equally without discrimination. The reductions in discrimination and stereotyping, which follow inclusive practices, also benefit society as a whole by building up all children to become valuable societal assets throughout their lives (Dugarova, 2014).

This might simply be a result of a society having a more open view of disability so that there are possibilities for greater interactions in a society. However, Al-Rubiyeh's (2010) study of the needs and rights of children with special needs in the KSA found that this society was quite closed, which posed major social barriers for these children. His research sought the views of parents and other caregivers of many children with special needs, unlike my research which just focuses on early years' inclusion of SEN children.

2.3.2. Integration and inclusion

In Western societies, the concept of integration was articulated back in the 1960s. However, this principle has generated a debate about the meaning of integration as compared with inclusion (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). Vislie (2003) confirms that

there are debates about these two concepts, which are often used interchangeably and do not have a common meaning between nations. Recently, integration has been replaced by inclusion in the human rights discourse.

Avramidis and Norwich (2002) define integration as having three formulations: locational integration (placing children with SEN with their mainstream peers in the same schools), social integration (some degree of interaction between children with SEN and their peers), and functional integration (some participation in learning experiences). Although this perspective of integration places children both with and without SEN in 'least restrictive environments', this approach towards integration cannot guarantee that each child with SEN would be functionally integrated, as the level of integration of each child with SEN would depend on individual needs. In this sense, integration can be viewed as an 'assimilationist' process, depending upon the extent to which a child can adjust to a mainly unchanged school system.

Inclusion, on the other hand, adopts a restructuring of the school system so that every school can accommodate every child irrespective of disability (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002). In other words, inclusion represents 'accommodation' rather than 'assimilation'. The term inclusion has now taken on a wider meaning with broader political and social values. In this sense, inclusion is comparable to equality as a social value relating to all aspects of life. However, Vislie (2003) argues that both terminologies (integration and inclusion) can be employed to represent similar processes and outcomes, confirming that integration is coming close to the concept of inclusion.

Daly and Conway (2015) considers the integrated classroom as distinct from the concept of inclusion. He claims that there are differences between inclusion and integration, in that inclusion takes place within general education while integration implies that the special educational needs of students are addressed through the use of specific programmes. In the integrated classroom a teacher recognises the needs of each learner with disabilities and, based on identification of issues and problems, specific programmes can be provided, which should improve the performance of these students. The above debate shows that true inclusion covers more issues than integration concerning how to educate all children.

Norwich (2008) also looked at the concept of social inclusion in education and where children should be educated, and was careful to separate the concepts of integration and inclusion. *Integration* implies that SEN children can ‘fit’ within a mainstream classroom, while *inclusion* implies that a classroom can change so that all children can participate and benefit: but separating these two concepts is not always easy. Integration according to Rodriguez (2015) simply refers to the concept which allows children with disabilities to attend mainstream educational schools. However, a child may be accepted in a mainstream school, but could be taught differently in a separate classroom. In these separate classrooms, to address the specific social and/or academic needs of children with disabilities, the child can manage easily and the teacher can make adjustments according to each child’s needs.

According to Vislie (2003), integration requires three fundamental bases: firstly, children with disabilities have the right to education. In most western European countries, though, these children might not have this right, so they study in special education institutions or remain at home. Secondly, children with disabilities have the right to study in mainstream schools. This is in contradiction to situations where there are special needs institutions for children with disabilities. Finally, integration involves total reorganisation of special education, including identification of children who require extra support, the financial issues, followed by integration involving local school organisational structures, and the handling of teaching and learning in integrated classes. Today there is a movement from integration to inclusion. However, Sebba and Ainscow (1996) confirm that inclusion as a concept challenges much of the existing practice in the special needs field in many countries. Runswick-Cole (2011) describes international laws regarding inclusive education; this author explains that inclusion for SEN children is now on the global agenda and it is expected to determine the rights of these children. According to UNICEF (1989), inclusive education has the following aims:

- *To value all the needs of students and staff in an equal manner;*
- *To increase the number of participating students by reducing their exclusion from their communities, cultures, local schools and curricula;*

- *To restructure cultural practices and policies, so that children may respond positively towards diversity;*
- *To reduce the barriers for children with disabilities to learn and participate alongside other children;*
- *To acknowledge the rights of students to quality education;*
- *To emphasize the role of schools in developing values, building communities and increasing the achievements of all pupils.* UNICEF (1989).

Runswick-Cole (2011) questions whether there should be less inclusion, to remove the bias towards inclusion in UK society. However, she concludes that this is not the time to remove this bias; instead we should be attempting to try to put in place true inclusion.

Inclusion in practice has gained momentum, because simply integrated classrooms can mean the downsizing of special educational services provided to children with disabilities. In mainstream classrooms the majority of the teachers are not trained in special needs (although this is changing), and thus cannot provide specific training to children with disabilities, which creates challenging situations (Heikka *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, in integrated classrooms, using mainstream assessment methods, some inappropriate for SEN children, the result may be academic performance failure (Heikka *et al.*, 2013). Norwich (2008) asks for a more sophisticated and multi-dimensional model of provision for all children, but especially for SEN children, so the children with disabilities can be identified, placed where they can learn best, and given appropriate programmes and practices.

To conclude, I could argue that there is a significant difference between the two concepts because inclusion, as compared with integration, can provide an equal environment and equal rights for all children where they can find their own unique place and collaborate. Moreover, such an environment affords a moral position and respect for all children in addition to applying diversity as a learning tool.

2.3.3. Social versus medical models of disability

Attitudes towards disability affect the ways individuals think and behave towards individuals with disabilities. They also impact on outcomes for individuals with disabilities as a consequence of how they are treated and the extent to which they are able to participate in society. The attitudes that individuals with disabilities experience will affect the way they will interact with others (Aiden and McCarthy, 2014).

There are two main models: the medical model and the social model. The social model of disability considers that

disability is caused by the way society organized, rather than, by the person's impairment or difference. It looks to the way of removing barriers that restricted the life choices for people with disabilities'. On the other hand, the medical model considers 'what is wrong with the person, not what the person needs, it creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their lives (Aiden and McCarthy, 2014, p.1).

Booth et al. (2002) discuss the implications of social education concerning disability in the early years. The authors distinguish the social model of thinking from the medical model of disability, thus providing what they consider to be required for young children. Having two models allows for an exploration of the differences between disability and impairment. Booth et al. (2002) explain that the medical model considers historical information – that is, it illustrates what medicine has adopted in order to deal with a disability and associated medical issues. If a medical model is applied early in life then it may aid parents and teachers in identifying possible problems. This can then assist in an analysis of a specific disability so that the child concerned can be referred to experts and the experts can deal with this case in an effective manner. The experts can identify two scenarios: cure and care (Anastasiou, and Kauffman, 2013). Thus, a medical model applied early in life can be useful for parents and teachers.

On the other hand, the thinking behind the social model involves the ability to move forward and to stop thinking about disabilities and rather dwell on abilities. It allows for thinking more widely about a child and his/her society. The medical model can identify problems such as visual, mobility or hearing impairment, thus revealing the difficulties experienced by an individual when looking, moving, hearing or talking.

However, the medical model is also sometimes defined as a 'personal tragedy model', as it identifies the difficulties faced by individuals due to impairment experiences (Wall, 2008). The impairments demonstrate abnormality or loss due to physiological, functioning or anatomical structures; Wall (2008) finds that children could view templates to define this. A medical model tends to show the inability to do anything in a normal manner like other people. This represents a major contrast to the social model of thinking about disability as shown in Table 1 below.

According to Bailey et al. (2015) the social model of disability allows for recognising the feelings of a child and affords them chances to express these feelings. It encourages children with disabilities to share their views and take part in social issues. It also allows them to gain a good education, so that they can fulfil their dreams just like other children. The model also focuses on developing behavioural abilities in children with disabilities though adopting various approaches. Barnes (2012) argues that individuals with disabilities themselves created and developed the social model, and its primary focus is towards a response to how society views them. It shows the experiences of individuals with disabilities, including within welfare programmes and health programmes provided for them. It is a fact that individuals with disabilities are often excluded from society because of what is considered to be their physical and/or mental illness. They are often not expected to take part in recreational activities, employment, housing, public transport, and education, among others, and these barriers prevent them from gaining equal rights. However, due to recent developments associated with inclusion, educational and anti-discrimination policies and equal opportunities, there has been increasing provision for individuals with disabilities (Runswick-Cole, 2011). Regulatory bodies and laws have introduced positive actions which allow individuals with disabilities to benefit equally part in society. Table 1 below illustrates clearly the differences between the medical model and the social model:

Table 1: Differences between the Medical Model and the Social Model (Kristiansen et al., 2008)

Medical Model Thinking	Social Model Thinking
Child has disability and impairments	Values the child
Diagnosis of the problem	Helps the child to identify needs and strengths
Results in labelling the child with disabilities	Explores barriers and develops solutions
The child becomes the focus of attention	The outcomes are based on a designed programme
Imposes assessment and mentoring programmes	Resources are available to fulfil needs
It provides alternative and segregated services	Training is provided for all professional staff and parents are involved
Results in permanent exclusion	Diversity is welcomed and the child is involved at every stage
Society is not evolving because of stereotyping and rigidity	Society evolves according to market dynamics

Booth and Ainscow (2011) differentiate between a social model and a medical model in the following terminologies:

Disabilities can be seen as barriers to participation for people with impairments, chronic pain and illness.... A medical model of disability views the barriers faced by people with impairments as a direct consequences of their impairment (p.42).

Thomas and Vaughn (2004), on the other hand, point to the complexity between the two models by stating:

When thinking this way, success or failure at school is not seen as governed by complex, social, cultural and intellectual interactions but rather by one-dimensional factors, such as disability. The thinking is in a deficit or medical model wherein something is seen to have gone wrong and is to be put right (p.109).

Although these models have been presented as separate with clear opposites, in practice this may not be the case and there are significant and complex interactions between the two. For example, any individual child that is taught in an inclusive school may be taken out of class for specific periods to work on special areas of need. This highlights the complexity of inclusion, as this child is *included* in the education offered to most of a class but *excluded* from full participation.

Therefore, in recognition of the complexities of the two models I have used them in combination; as has been discussed, the medical model did not explain the personal experience of disability or help the children with disabilities to develop more inclusive ways of living. As a result, it led to low self-esteem, poor education, undeveloped life skills and consequent high unemployment levels. In addition, this model requires the breaking of natural relationships between children with disabilities and their families, communities and society as a whole. However, the social model of disability starts from a different view. It ignores the type of disabilities. Instead, it establishes that everyone is equal and demonstrates that it is society which erects barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities participating and restricts their opportunities. The combination between these two models is important because it is not just for people who directly deal with a child with a disability but also for everyone in society in order to build positive attitudes and a better understanding.

2.3.4. Children with SEN and disabilities

As discussed by Sammons et al. (2003), the education of children with special educational needs is becoming more important in developing countries because of a general increase in awareness of what they can achieve. Today there are more positive attitudes towards disability in society. Moreover, due at least partially to pressure from international regulatory bodies such as the UN, the fulfilment of SEN children's lives has become an area of high consideration and focus. The pressure is on families and educational institutions as they are considered to be the major forces involved in the upbringing and development of these children. Societal awareness is important in order to deal with disability issues. Singer (2006) states that it is necessary to consider the needs of children with disabilities in order to put in place appropriate welfare and social services and to increase awareness of social issues towards difference in general. It has to be established that children with disabilities have the right to contribute to their society (Montgomery, 2013).

Al-Rubiyeh (2010) postulates that in the KSA the family, care workers, child educators and specialists should learn to understand the developmental processes operating in a child with special needs, so that his/her needs can be addressed at every

stage. A continuous monitoring process allows all involved to recognise weaknesses and adopt ways to improve the mental and physical health of a child. Underlining this view, Maier (1978) argues that the human development process is continuous, and is something which is happening every minute. It is a process, which is based on an individual's interactions with their society, to allow children to cope with their environment and identify appropriate survival elements. Further growth then occurs through adjusting to more differentiated and extended ecological environments. Each individual engages with others and gains motivation from his/her environment. Therefore, recognition of the human development process is seen to be of utmost importance in the early stages of childhood. At this stage, any disadvantages naturally occurring or brought upon a child can result in long-term detrimental effects. To reduce or lessen negative effects, Friend and Bursuck (2002) recommend that children with disabilities should be provided with a great deal of extra support for their educational needs.

A specially designed programme for each child with disabilities could therefore meet his/her individual needs, the aim being to provide quality education and also social inclusion. Salvia et al. (2012) perceives that the quality of inclusive education provided for a special needs child is based on an educationally inclusive school, an interactive institution where the learning, teaching, achievement, well-being, and attitudes of every child are considered.

Through identifying the mental and physical conditions and capabilities of a child with disability, their special educational needs can be addressed, and if these children are provided with an inclusive environment, they have possibilities for exploring beyond what they (and others) consider to be their limited boundaries. An open environment and inclusive classroom provided for these children helps them in learning effectively through interacting with their peers (Friend and Bursuck, 2002).

Therefore, in my research I considered it essential to investigate accurately KSA policy implementations of inclusive education, to determine how well the Saudi legislation is being put into practice, to discover and evaluate the mechanisms put in place in the KSA so that greater inclusion of pre-school children with disabilities can

be realised, and to conjecture how changing practices might change attitudes towards disability in the wider society.

2.3.5. Operationalising of SEN inclusion in the KSA

The Saudi educational system, in the beginning, was only available for children who were born to wealthy families and the elite classes (Al-Jadid, 2013). However, slowly and gradually, due to an expansion in educational facilities and pressure from international bodies, 25,000 schools have been built. However, before 1958, a policy concerning special education was not developed in the KSA. After this date the importance of education of children with special needs started to emerge (Al-Jadid, 2013). The first step was in the form of institutions for blind children. In 1962, the MOE developed a department of special learning, which aimed to improve learning and rehabilitation centres for three types of students: the blind, the deaf and those with mental retardation (Pavan, 2013). Specialist institutions were created, so that they could gain what was considered to be an education suitable for their individual levels of ability and understanding. The tools, techniques and strategies used by these institutions specifically focused on the children's problems and thus many needs were met. This approach could be described as following the medical model of disability, but these specialists' intuitions did not take into consideration the social needs of the SEN children. Therefore, it was felt that more actions should be taken to meet these social needs, such as providing professional staff and defined programmes of study.

In 1987, new disability legislation was passed, which aimed to provide full rights for individual with disabilities. This law brought advancement in Saudi society because it stated that all individuals were, in law, to be treated equally. Currently, in the KSA, the quality of educational services for children with special educational needs is much improved. For example, now a concept of least restrictive environment (LRE) is applied (from the American educational system, which means that children should spend as much time as possible with their peers who do not receive special education). According to this principle, the child with disability is included in general education to the maximum extent that is appropriate, and this depends on the nature of

the disability. Thus, it is assumed that children with disabilities should attend a special class or be separated from general schools only if the general schools cannot provide an appropriate education for them.

However, the Saudi education sector needs to make further improvements in special education needs, so that increased value can be given to children with disabilities (Zeina *et al*, 2014). Thus there is a need for a shift in the overall culture within the KSA educational system: the Saudi educational system should provide additional support for SEN children by embracing children's differences, for example, providing regular training for academic staff and improving the facilities and access for SEN children within mainstream pre-schools. In addition, there could be additional collaborations between specialist centres and the MOE in order to identify and evaluate the nature of disability in early life.

Children with disabilities in pre-school education in the KSA may have some support from SEN specialists, but they participate fully in general education. These children share their time and effort with mainstream peers and perform extracurricular activities with them (Al-khashrami, 2001). However, the approach to learning they follow is often different from that of children without disabilities. Children who have severe disabilities are still gaining their education in separate educational institutions. This is because it is felt that their mental and physical conditions hinder them from benefitting from a general education environment. According to some research, the segregated education provided for these children does improve their mental abilities and health (Zeina *et al*, 2014).

Although there is a notable shift in the Saudi educational system in terms of applying different approaches to teaching SEN children, there is still a lack in other aspects of education policy and the institutions as they stand at present cannot fully provide inclusion for children with disabilities. For example, the question of funding and providing facilitated pre-schools needs to be addressed.

2.3.6. A critique of special educational needs

Srivastava *et al* (2015) state that an inclusive educational sector could provide better equipment to deal with the specific needs of each child and also helps in catering for the needs of children with disabilities. However, the authors argue that the social education provided in inclusive classrooms might actually threaten a child with disability because of his/her inability to keep up with others. These children may face barriers because of the diverse environment provided by an inclusive classroom. For instance, children who are having socialisation problems may get harsh reactions in a general classroom, and this can create difficulties for teachers. Moreover, these children can face labelling issues, which would discourage them. The lack of concern given by others towards them may lead to the development of a feeling of unworthiness, which would negatively influence overall performance (Thomas, 2011).

Sundstrom (2014) has claimed that in many cases mainstream teachers are unable to provide appropriate support for children with disabilities in general classrooms. Some teachers focus on those children who are talented; thus they have less concern and time for others, limiting the progress of children with disabilities. The Saudi Ministry of Healthcare (2011) provided a disability code for diagnosed children that guarantees them access to social, medical, educational and rehabilitations services. Al Quraini (2012) argues that the policy implemented by the Saudi government is a valuable complementary service specifically for children with disabilities, so as to provide for their betterment. Moreover, now the Regulation of Special Education Programs (RSEPI) asserts that education must be provided for all children with disabilities. Zeina *et al* (2014) contends that the individualised programmes provided for these children must address their individual specific needs through these customised programmes; the RSEPI expects there to be a proper procedure assessing and evaluating eligibility for each child to be given special education.

Thus these policies were implemented by the Saudi government in an attempt to provide a quality education for children with disabilities. However, my research focuses specifically on children in the early years' provision, and therefore these

children may not yet have had a formal diagnosis and access to all the available resources.

This issue may be further compounded by the fact that SEN in children may develop at different stages; this is underlined by a study conducted in the UK by Sammons et al. (2003). Their longitudinal study examined the quality of the early years' education provided to children aged three to six in the UK and the Transitional Special Educational Needs (EYTSEN) programme. The UK study into early years' education found that good quality provision actually reduced the rates at which children were assessed through cognitive and behavioural tests to be at risk (Sammons et al., 2003). Thus, even though some children had not been assessed as having SEN, their early years' education was effective in predicting their attainment of essential skills.

These early years' studies demonstrate further the complexity faced in research studies, as children may be at different stages of development with respect to SEN issues. SEN may be undiagnosed and or even unrecognised; for example environmental conditions such as poverty during childhood can have lasting effects on the development of all children [e.g., lead in petrol can lead to learning disabilities (Chisolm and Harrison, 1956)].

According to the WHO (2012c) access to mainstream services such as healthcare and education plays a significant role in determining child health, development and inclusion for all children. As developmental delays may arise not due to biological but rather external, environmental factors, it is important for all children to be included in mainstream situations, so that they may be properly assessed and have the opportunity to advance in a normal manner. Children who are first assessed as having special educational needs but later progress normally are thus not being expected to change schools and approaches; likewise, those who develop special educational needs later in their development are able to remain in their mainstream environment with additional help. In inclusive situations all children can develop socially so as to become valued members of their society (Zeina *et al*, 2014). Thus, it is notable that there have been many attempts to analysis this complexity of special needs education. There is still a need for further clarification in KSA pre-schools.

2.3.7. Inclusion in Early Years' Education

Several research studies on inclusion and special educational needs in the early years have addressed the importance of focusing on children's needs. For example, Clough and Nutbrown (2004) describe policy concerning SEN and inclusion in pre-schools and its implementation in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Five key themes are discussed: the personal experience of early childhood educators; their professional development; their views of childhood; their thoughts on inclusion and exclusion, and their beliefs and practices around the roles of parents. Although the authors found differences in policy and strategies in the four parts of the UK, they discovered that all professionals were attempting to achieve similar goals with respect to inclusion. Most educators were supportive of inclusion, but their responses varied depending upon their professional backgrounds and experience. In this study, I investigate the enactment of policy concerning SEN in pre-schools in the KSA and the factors related to success of this policy, such as the attitude of early childhood educators, their knowledge and their professional experience.

In the same year Nutbrown and Clough (2004) published an extensive survey of educators in European countries and their attitudes to SEN and pre-school inclusion. Issues and difficulties were considered. The authors noted that there was a commitment among educators to educating children with learning difficulties and to their inclusion, but there were also worries about how to educate children with emotional/behavioural problems. At that time, exclusive practices were seen to persist in spite of aspirations towards inclusion. The conclusions from the study were that personal and professional experiences are very important for inclusion; that inclusive practices need to be resourced properly; that principles and practice may differ; and that parents and the home are critical towards the education of children with disabilities. There were differences found between countries, due to educational traditions and cultures, national priorities and economic and geopolitical factors, but all were working towards inclusive practices. In 2009, the same authors (Nutbrown and Clough, 2009) interviewed pre-school children. One of their findings was that identity and self-esteem are central to young children's perspectives, whether with disability or not. Nutbrown has continued to study young children and their peers

(Carter and Nutbrown, 2016); in this case, the friendships they develop and how important these are to the individual children. There were rules, routines, concerns and practices, which the children understood but were often unknown to the school staff. The authors have put together a Pedagogy of Friendship which could help teachers deal with how and with whom children establish friendships and provide them with ways of being inclusive in their work and play. Thus friendships can be nurtured – learning is best accomplished when children feel they belong and are socially successful.

These and other publications by UK academics on inclusion and early years, education have led to changes in how UK teachers and parents can approach the education of young children with disabilities so that they are not excluded from learning and from their society. Although the importance, challenges and concerns of early years' education have been acknowledged, the issues involved in inclusion continue to plague KSA educators, particularly as there is a considerable dearth of KSA research at this stage. To rectify this, there is a need to identify specifically the stakeholders' (e.g., 'policy makers, teachers, and parents) concerns and then begin to establish methods to directly address the tensions.

2.3.8. Controversies associated with inclusion

While steps have been taken towards the implementation of inclusion in the global context, there continue to be critics. For example, during the early stages of inclusion of children with disabilities in American schools, there were views that it was being implemented too quickly. Furthermore, some argued that mainstream classroom teachers needed more resources, training and support to teach children with disabilities effectively in their classrooms (SEDL, 1994). There were concerns about whether children with disabilities were getting appropriate attention and whether mainstream education was being disrupted. In a survey of teachers in West Virginia, 78% said children with disabilities would not benefit from inclusion (Lombardi et al., 1994), and argued that inclusion was being championed for cost-cutting rather than educational reasons. Parents of children with disabilities and special education specialists were also sceptical (Lombardi et al., 1994). Some felt that services would

diminish and that the facilities that needed to be in place for special educational needs might not be available in mainstream classrooms. Parents also worried about the possibilities for socialisation in mainstream classrooms. Even the parents of gifted/talented children saw difficulties in the provision of appropriate education for individual children. In short, there were many who considered inclusion to be a step backward. In the US, criticisms have also been made of the No Child Left Behind policy (Price, 2010), as it is argued that including children with disabilities into mainstream schools can compromise a school's success. Thus, children with disabilities tend to be clustered in a few schools leading to 'backdoor discrimination' (Price, 2010), which can result in the replacement of general state schools with selective ones that have no legal obligation to accept children who have disabilities. Price (2010) recommends legislation to ensure that all schools are required to accommodate all children irrespective of their particular needs.

The Dutch policy of integration put differences in academic and psychosocial development of children to the test in special and mainstream education (Karsten et al 2001). In the Netherlands, Karsten et al. (2001) studied the development of primary school SEN children who were attending either special or mainstream schools. The Netherlands is known to have little private education, and has accommodated some children with problems into mainstream schools since the 1990s. These authors found that, although there was great variability between schools, there were few real differences between the two school types (regular and special), so that at-risk children were not found to do better in specialist education. They also examined both cognitive and psychosocial development in these children, using matched pairs. The results from their large-scale longitudinal study showed that those children in regular schools did actually make more academic progress after four years than those in special education settings did. However, not all children in the study showed positive outcomes from mainstreaming, and there were situations where SEN children did not make progress, became unmotivated, and even became problematic. In the UK, the DfEE (1997) found that able children at inclusive schools sometimes felt that staff favoured children with disabilities. Bullying can also take place, although this can also occur in special schools (Torrance, 2000). Koster et al. (2009) reviewed the international literature concerning the social aspects of inclusive education for

children with disabilities. Conducting a meta-analysis using 62 articles, they conclude that social participation is the key determinant in whether children with disabilities are truly socially integrated with their peers (ibid.). In like manner, the recent literature (e.g., Saddler, 2014) on inclusion mentions that it is the social needs of children with disabilities which need more emphasis. However, the issue of how to measure success in social development is problematic.

Dame Warnock (2005) returned to the subject of inclusion, and in 2005 called for a rethink on special educational needs, inclusion and Statementing. ‘Statementing’ – or a statement of special educational needs – is a formal document describing a child's learning difficulties as well as the support that will be provided. Dame Warnock claimed that the large increase in numbers of children being statemented was not justified, and also that further moves towards inclusion should be stopped. She wrote of the continuing need for small specialist schools, that bullying of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is inevitable, and that statements should only be used to select children for special schools. She wondered whether educational benefits were being sacrificed for economic reasons. Subsequent research commissioned by the National Union of Teachers (McBeath et al., 2006) claimed that inclusion was a policy failure and that the needs of children with disabilities were often not being met in mainstream schools, leading the authors to conclude that not all schools can accommodate all children.

The Warnock and McBeath publications were widely reported in the media (e.g., BBC News, 2006). Terzi *et al.* (2010) analysed the views of two leading but opposing players in the debate concerning inclusion, Warnock and Norwich. The main questions in the debate include issues such as which differences between children are relevant in their education, whether all children should be educated together, what would be a fair allocation of funding for the education of all children, and what does inclusion really mean. Warnock is described as being highly critical of the idea of inclusion, having used words such as ‘surely disastrous’ (ibid.). She criticises the inclusion of children with disabilities, in addition to advocating a review of all educational provision and requesting evidence-based analyses to inform all future decisions about inclusion. In contrast, Norwich (2010) argues that education should include common entitlements, taking into account a plurality of values, and offering

flexible provision. Terzi *et al*, (2010) concludes that a capability approach might reconcile the differences in these attitudes. In effect, this approach argues that attempting to provide education that enables each child to achieve valued ‘functionings’ to match their abilities, no matter where this occurs, enables the attainment of well-being. As such, a capabilities approach, in addition to the rights approach, provides a supporting background to my research.

One recurring comment from educationalists and mainstream teachers is that, if inclusion is to work well, teacher training needs to include provisions for special educational needs. Price (2010) notes that the level of teacher experience in any school has positive effects on school success, even when other factors such as special educational needs are present. However, there continue to be complaints from teachers about the difficulties inherent in inclusive education (Price, 2010). Ellis et al. (2008) reviewed the UK literature on inclusion and found that there are too many interpretations of what inclusion is, ideologically, politically, professionally and personally. The authors asked questions regarding the ability of teachers to balance their multiple competing demands, of which only a limited number involve disabilities and inclusion, while retaining their professionalism. Meanwhile, Glazzard (2011) published data from a focus group of British primary school teachers and teaching assistants, in which the participants were asked about their understanding of inclusion, their views about its practice, the usefulness of teaching assistance, and whether inclusive schools could be good schools. Most importantly, they were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with Warnock’s argument that the inclusion of all children should be abandoned and that specialist schools would instead be more appropriate for certain SEN children. A minority of teachers exhibited negative attitudes towards inclusion, citing problems with funding, resources, training, and parental resistance, but the majority were positive. Mukherjee et al. (2000) highlight the importance of teachers understanding special health needs, in addition to their need for information and emotional support when dealing with children with chronic health issues. Again, the levels of training and professional development available to provide the difficult-to-implement expectations of inclusion imposed by different school authorities are questioned.

For example, 'the Green paper Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (DfEE, 2003) in the UK was seen as a key move to the promotion of well being for children and young people. However, Davies et al. (2009) discovered that trainee teachers were uncertain about what was really meant by the concept of 'Every Child Matters', as well as by the ideas of community support, multi-agency action and pupil inclusion units. In essence, they were unaware of how best to put the concept of equal opportunities into practice (Davies et al., 2009). The need for more training and education in special educational needs and inclusion for all teachers is thus evident, even in the UK.

New legislation concerning special educational needs was released in 2014, entitled the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations (DfES, 2014a) and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (DfES, 2014b). The new legislation includes some significant changes, such as the introduction of educational, health and care plans in place of the statement of SEN. The new codes also include a new method for the identification of SEN, a multi-agency approach to meeting the needs of youngsters with disabilities, the provision of choice of schools given to parents, and the allocation of a personal budget (Norwich and Eaton, 2014).

Norwich and Eaton (2014) state that the UK current legislative model bears resemblance to the WHO's child and young person's International Classification Functioning (ICF) shown in Figure 2 which involves an individual's needs being taken into consideration according to their health needs, in light of factors that include body function/structure, activities and participation. These needs are then integrated in order to devise the provisions that are required.

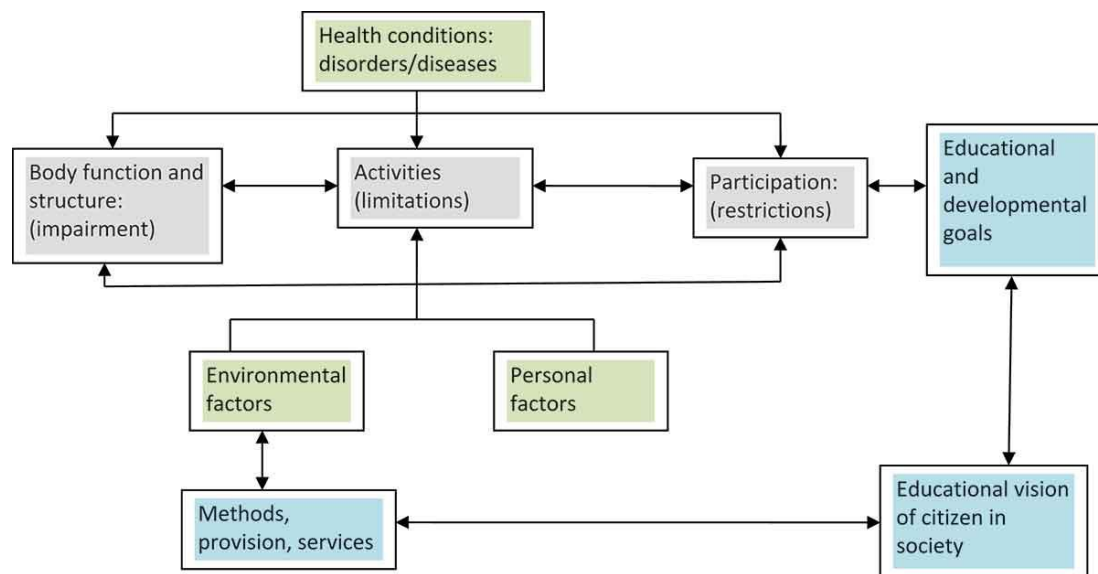


Figure 2: ICF expanded for educational use (from Norwich and Eaton, 2014:129)

The new legislation appears to be promising parents a voice for their child and their education; however greater clarity is required on the budget allocated to parents. Moreover, as the above figure demonstrates, in order to meet the complexity and dynamic nature of a children's needs, a multi-agency approach to implementation is required involving professionals in education, social services, health and so forth in discussions and assistance to children with disabilities and their families. This approach may be successful if fulfilled adequately by all relevant parties, as exemplified by the integrated services established by some London boroughs (London Borough of Merton, 2015).

A report by EADSNE (2010) sought to assure proper preparation of mainstream teachers during their initial teacher training to ensure that they can adopt inclusive practices. The report aimed to determine what is known internationally about the changing ideas concerning inclusion and what policy frameworks are in place to support it. Much of the study dealt with teacher education for inclusion, looking at ways for teachers to learn how to deal with issues that include social justice, respect, fairness and equity, as well as how they can best understand what disability means in terms of isolation and rejection. The report urges finding effective practice where it exists, and thus providing models of training, curriculum, teaching practice and assessment. Teachers need to know how to assess the effectiveness of the inclusive

practices that have been implemented, while also serving as advocates of reform for their classrooms, with the evidence that this entails.

Excellence in teaching is not only important for economic growth, but also to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. Social inclusion can change schools and children so that all children are treated individually, according to each one's needs. Trainee teachers should be encouraged and enabled to teach all learners, and be supported with effective models, examples, experience and practice. Through the observation of inclusive education in practice, their training should equip them to examine their own attitudes to difference, to promote the success of all children, and to communicate effectively with all parents. As a consequence, initial teacher training concerns about inclusion are allayed with instruction and guidance about how this goal can be accomplished successfully (EADSNE, 2010).

In conclusion, the topic of inclusion has been addressed from a variety of perspectives. It is evident that inclusion has both its supporters and opponents. The proponents of inclusion, including many national and international organisations, refer to empirical studies that demonstrate the educational and social benefits of inclusion in schools. I find such advocacy to be persuasive; inclusion approaches have already been implemented successfully in many schools in the UK and have been shown to provide effective education for many children who might formerly have been attending special schools (Frederickson et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the extant literature also highlights a high degree of scepticism regarding not only the effectiveness of inclusive education, but also whether it is socially and morally appropriate. In my view, the advantages strongly outweigh the disadvantages, and inclusion fits well into a human rights model as well as a social justice/capability model of education for children with disabilities. The EADSNE report (2010) explicitly states that no single model of inclusion is suitable for all countries, and that one should therefore be cautious about exporting models from country to country. Effectively, while countries can learn from each other, they should give serious consideration to their own social, economic, political, cultural, historical or religious circumstances. This is particularly relevant to the area that I am investigating, as the country under examination has myriad religious, social and

cultural differences from the Western European and North American contexts that are the focus of the majority of research literature. However, in Islamic/Arabic countries such as Saudi Arabia, there is currently relatively little data on the views of parents and teachers, or on the effectiveness of inclusion; addressing this lack of data is one aim of my research. It is therefore essential be mindful throughout of the need to respond to insights from international contexts while simultaneously maintaining an awareness of the uniqueness of the KSA context. What follows is a discussion of the current literature concerning techniques for inclusion in practice in terms of good quality and a pedagogical model of inclusion.

2.4. Inclusion in practice

Tassoni (2003) discusses the special education needs Code of Practice 2001 which was intended to apply in any setting, including per-schools and nurseries, and its dependency on government funding. The Code advises that practitioners can achieve a good practice of inclusion by differentiating the curriculum in order to meet the individual needs of each child. Nutbrown *et al.* (2013) address the issue of what inclusion really means and how it can be put into practice. As they describe it, it should be a state of mind and will. It is operational and should be measured by outcomes. Although societies are often exclusive, inclusion should come from within and really means how people treat each other. It should be broad and not limited to 'special' children, so that aspects such as social class and poverty are also considered. The authors present means by which everybody can participate so that inclusion is achieved in early years settings.

Drew *et al.* (2002) studied four children with Autism and in fact found that inclusion can work for some children with disabilities, and that the main elements for achieve successful practice are to respond to the needs of children, parents and educators. Moreover, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) state that a key element in the successful implementation of inclusive policy in practice is the views of the personnel who have the greatest responsibility for applying it – that is, the teachers. They argue that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices

since teachers' acceptance of a policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it.

This was not necessarily always the case, though, as Nutbrown and Clough (2006) found that it is not easy for willing practitioners to understand and implement the concept of inclusion, even after providing them with appropriate tools and comprehensive training packages. One example of difficulties was observed in a large day nursery in the UK, despite the practitioners attending regular training sessions provided by the local authority. It was expected that the training sessions could even help with management of emotions. However, the practitioners were clearly struggling to deal with young children with disabilities.

One specific area of concern is the kind of interaction between a child with disability and his/her teacher. As a result, it may not be the child's fault or that of the practitioner if inclusion is not working. In a particular case, every time the practitioner was close to the child the practitioner experienced a physical reaction and was sick (Nutbrown and Clough, 2006). Therefore, practitioners need support, because inclusion places a high demand on them emotionally, physically and professionally (ibid.). A study conducted by Lyon et al. (2009) investigated the impact of teacher-child interaction training on the development of young children. The study looked at children who came from an urban, low income, ethnic minority pre-school in the US. The findings showed that teachers who underwent teacher-child interaction training were well equipped to support these young children by providing positive feedback and attention, thus benefitting their social, emotional and mental health.

It is not easy to put inclusion into practice; however there are still many successful examples, according to Arduin (2015), who compared European countries where inclusion is practiced. The author argues that countries with social democratic values, such as Finland, are typically more successful in offering a truly inclusive educational system, and concluded that almost all children require some special assistance at some stage in their education (ibid.).

According to Fortin (2009), inclusive education should be a goal that includes explicit commitments, such as those required in services and programmes. Inclusive values,

principles and practices can combined provide an education that is meaningful, effective and of high quality, enabling the principles of justice for all to be enacted. Important areas that should be encouraged are modifications in systems, curricula and professional training, and the level of cooperation among all involved. Emphasis should also be on achieving participation, in work, recreation and culture. These actions can enable children with disabilities to realise a good quality of life. It is thought that the inclusion of children with disabilities provides benefits for both them and for children without disabilities, as the former can experience the joy of education amongst their peers and the latter will not develop negative attitudes to disability (Fortin, 2009). The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2012) provides an Index for Inclusion with several criteria, including valuing all children; increasing their participation and reducing barriers; restructuring cultures, policies and practices; and viewing difference in a positive light.

The general usefulness of pre-school education for all children, including children with disabilities, is highlighted within the EYFS (2008), and has been extensively documented elsewhere (e.g., Campbell and Pungello, 2000). In the United States, Hestenes et al. (2008) compared inclusive and non-inclusive pre-school classrooms, and found that the inclusive ones were of higher quality in a number of aspects. Particularly pronounced differences were found in the teacher-child interactions, where inclusive classrooms showed more acceptable behaviour by both staff and children. The results showed that inclusion of children with disabilities does not result in lower quality programmes or less adequate teacher-child interactions. Mrug and Wallander (2002) found that children with physical disabilities who attend inclusive schools scored very differently on personality tests to those in special schools. They were shown to be less aggressive, to have a more positive self-image, and were generally more positive about the world (ibid.). The most positive self-concept was found in children with disabilities living with their families and attending mainstream schools, although more analysis is required to assess long-term outcomes (ibid.).

Clearly, the early assessment of a potential disability and the identification of related needs are important so that children with disabilities are able to benefit from a suitable educational environment from a young age. This assessment is also important for the schools, giving them the opportunity to effectively prepare and adjust their learning

environment as required. For example, in the KSA, children could be assessed between 0-6 years old. It is the parents' responsibility and decision to arrange the assessment, with the support from various government organisations, but not all parents choose to take up this option (Al-Rubiyeh, 2010). Thus, in this situation there may be a lack of diagnosis; and the importance of diagnosis in the early years can lead to issues during the early years' education of these children (Sammons et al., 2003).

In the KSA, King Abdullah instigated the 'Tatweer' project in 2013; this aimed at improving the educational system by advancing the educational workforce's professional skills, developing the curriculum and educational tools, and improving the school environment, extra curricula activities and student services (King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Public Education Development Project, 2016). The reform was implemented in two stages: the first 'smart model' was piloted with 25 female-only and 25 male-only schools but it was found to be too costly, as it tried to completely change the school from 'a place of education to an educational environment' using a range of innovative technologies (Alymani, 2014: 1515). Thus, although the main goal was the development of the Saudi educational system through the use of technology, the second stage shifted the aims away from technology towards the underlying principles as outlined at the beginning of this paragraph (Alymani, 2014).

As part of the Tatweer project a collaboration was set up between the University of Oregon in 2014, providing training, and a SEN group 'Early Childhood CARES' to provide manuals and support in setting up six pilot schemes costing the KSA \$441,651 (Tatweer, 2016). Even though the financial commitment of the KSA was apparent, the University of Oregon's website went further to describe the attitude of their KSA counterparts' views of inclusion as that 'there was surprise - bordering on disbelief - that, yes, all children with disabilities may attend public schools' (Pinkston, 2014). The website article describes how the attitudes began to change and how the pilot would be implemented.

Although only limited research has been done on the effect of the Tatweer project on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the six pilot early years' provisions, or on other children with special educational needs, a PhD research project that looked at children with deafness or hearing problems was carried out in 2015, where Alsalem's

(2015) focused on a 'universal design for learning' where it was proposed that the advanced use of technology had the potential for increasing the access and the overall inclusiveness of the educational experience. In this research project the teachers were given training on how to adopt the new technology. Overall, however, there was resistance to the fact that adopting a more 'universal' and inclusive approach would take more time and add to their responsibilities. As discussed previously, the Saudi educational system has in the past used a more segregated closed medical model towards disability, whereas this approach would require a more open social model of inclusion and a subsequent change in practices. Even though Alsalem's (2015) research project examined the educational system in general and did not focus on early years' education, as my research does, it has given me an indication of some of the resistance and tensions that may be associated with any implementation of a more open inclusive approach to educating children with disabilities in the KSA.

2.4.1. Good quality practice

Once a decision has been made to have inclusive early years' education, there is the practical matter of how to implement it, what best practice is, and what can be used to indicate quality. This has been a concern of many educational researchers over recent times. For example, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2003) conducted case studies in 15 European countries in an attempt to identify the factors that lead to good quality practice. The results show that there are three key groups of actors related to effective inclusive education: (1) *Co-operative teaching*: teachers needing support from both professionals outside the school and a range of colleagues within the school. The KSA pre-schools are used to team teaching, including teachers with supplementary training in special education, so that teachers are able to collaborate and gain knowledge from each other, which leads to improvements in the quality of education (Aldabas, 2015). (2) *Co-operative learning*: peer tutoring, according to the same study in 2003, can be particularly effective in the emotional and social areas of children' learning and development. In the KSA, Abaoud (2016) confirms that applying peer-tutoring strategies for teaching children with SEN enables children to build social relationships and strengthens the desire among children to work with each other. Indeed, a peer tutoring strategy for teaching

children with SEN can improve academic achievement and emotional relationships. Thus, it can be said that the Saudi education system employs this tutoring strategy as an effective tool to achieve a good quality of inclusion. (3) *Collaborative problem solving*: this is particularly important if there are children with undesirable behaviours. In this case the teachers need help in including these children in the classrooms by providing a set of limits and rules for all children.

In this respect, according to Aldabas (2015), the special education system in the KSA should take the initial step towards collaboration with the general education system, so that the two systems work together for successful inclusive education. To improve students' skills and diminish disruptive behaviour, principals, school consultants, social workers, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists all need to be involved and work as a team. Up to the present, the Saudi educational system does not adopt this strategy, so they should raise the level of collaboration in order to achieve a more successful practice of inclusion. According to the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2003) heterogeneous grouping in terms of the nature of the disability, flexible instructions and alternative approaches of learning can be effective tools to provide a good quality of inclusion. However, in order to achieve good quality in practice, all previous arrangements should be assessed and evaluated in terms of how they can direct instruction and reach high expectations. In addition, the curriculum should take into consideration individual needs and any additional support, as set by Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). The Saudi education system to some extent tries to implement these factors to achieve good quality of inclusion; however, more actions should be taken to increase the likelihood of real success of inclusion.

Ainscow et al. (2012) published work on how a school can ensure a good education for all its children. The authors used their long background in educational research to reach the conclusions that schools must work together and with their external communities, and all stakeholders need to work towards diminishing inequality to create a fairer society. This publication is intended to be used by senior staff in schools, to help them achieve these aims. After reviewing what research has been undertaken and what has been achieved, the authors proposed five organisational conditions that need to be in place to ensure each child receives a sound education;

these conditions are school collaboration, equity-focused local leadership, tackling school and external inequities to which children are exposed, ensuring that national policy enables and encourages local actions, and combining school and community movements towards establishing a fair society (ibid.).

In addition to the previous five factors, some KSA studies such as that of Al-Othman (2014) confirm that collaboration between the parents of SEN children and teachers plays an essential role in increasing the quality of the children's education and inclusion. This collaboration includes inviting the parents of SEN children to attend regular meetings with the teacher, and providing training courses and advisory services. It helps the parents to look at all aspects of the education of their children and to participate in the diagnosis and development of the individual educational plans for their children. Therefore, this study investigates in depth the knowledge and the attitudes of parents towards inclusion and the rights of children with disabilities, in order to increase the level of collaboration.

Another UAE-based study conducted by Alborn and Gaad (2014) confirms the importance of collaboration to attain a good quality of practice. The researchers adopted a multiple case-study approach using the Index for Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow. They found that there were too many barriers to inclusion in the UAE to achieve good quality of inclusion in practice, but they also noted positive welcoming school climates, support from many individuals, and increasing parent and community involvement. The Index was found very useful in assessing quality. This Index might also be of use in the KSA.

Based on the above studies, it is clear that common requirements exist that can guarantee the achievement of a good quality of inclusion; however, the education system in the KSA needs to work harder to put in place all these fundamental requirements, particularly the collaboration between stakeholders.

In the UK, Booth and Ainscow have published extensively about inclusion and how an index can help schools and classrooms proceed towards inclusive practice. Booth et al. (2000) describe how their Index for Inclusion can be used to describe a school, produce an inclusion plan, implement the plan, and review progress. Indicators and

questions are provided so as to assess achievements. In 2002, the two authors used the Index to describe indicators such as building community, establishing inclusive values, developing a school for all, organising support for diversity, orchestrating learning and mobilising resources. Their 2006 paper (Ainscow et al., 2006) describes action research involving 25 ordinary English schools, which were expected to implement a national standards agenda. The agenda was seen to constrain inclusive developments, but specific actions could still be taken to support inclusion. Although the Index is considered an effective tool to measure the quality of inclusion, it does not explain clearly how to implement inclusion in practice. Therefore, Booth (2011) produced a new version of the Index for Inclusion which would help prospective teachers learn about how to put inclusive values into action and use the values framework included. The author recommends the use of a values- and rights-based curriculum in all schools and in universities preparing people to teach.

In conclusion, it can be seen that there are means available for learning about how to practice inclusive education and how to determine quality. Thomas (2013) confirms that inclusiveness should promote social connections, community and capital and should not dwell on success and failure. Building confidence, promoting self worth, respect and recognition for all are just some of the aims proposed for all children. He concludes that they do not need new courses, curricula or programmes, but rather we should aim to have an open access education system not based on testing.

2.4.2. Pedagogy of inclusion in early years

Siraj-Blatchford (2002) defines pedagogy by relating this concept to the “how” or practice of educating. She states that pedagogy is a

set of instructional techniques and strategies which enable learning to take place and provide opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and dispositions within a particular social and material context. It refers to the interactive process between teacher and learner and to the learning environment (p, 3).

Accordingly, it involves putting together a set of techniques, instructions and strategies, which enables learning for all children, but particularly for a child with disabilities. The aim would be to provide opportunities to acquire skills, attitudes, knowledge and dispositions useful in a social context. This pedagogy becomes an

integration process between teacher and student, one based in a learning environment (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) observed classrooms and interviewed teachers in two Scottish primary schools; they concluded that certain strategies can be adopted so that SEN children are successfully educated. According to Anastasiou and Kauffman (2013) leadership approaches are essential, to direct how the staff, including teachers, understand the basic needs of their children and how they interact with parents, so that each child can be treated in an effective manner. Heikka et al. (2013) argues that usually the staff do follow pedagogical leadership techniques; this allows the leaders to create 'learning places' in which responsibilities are fairly distributed. The use of pedagogical leadership also allows innovation and creativity and it can present holistic approaches in which the needs of each child are addressed.

Hotulainen and Takala (2014) consider that interactions among children and teachers play a significant role in the development of children. Children's capabilities and skills are developed based largely on their early experiences and the quality of the education provided for them. Their experiences at home and at educational institutions impact greatly on the development of a child. In early childhood education and care (ECEC) these experiences are defined as the 'process quality'. This involves the pedagogical interactions among staff and child, and also the relationships among peers and their environment. Two models of pedagogy have been proposed (Westbrook et al., 2013); these (the performance model and the competence model) are discussed below.

2.4.3. Performance Model

Heikka *et al.* (2013) describes how the performance model focuses on the visible pedagogies in which staff explicitly spell out to children *what* they need to learn and *how* they need to learn. It helps to frame aims strongly, so that proper structures can be followed. It is based on standardised outcomes and a collective manner of behaving. The performance model helps in developing abilities in children based in an interactive and collective environment, and aims to provide inclusive education to children based on equal rights (Westbrook et al., 2013).

The performance model is generally used in inclusive classrooms, and this helps enhance the performance levels of children with disabilities. The teachers measure academic performance of children with or without disabilities, based on their overall learning. The performance of children without disabilities, unlike children with a disability, is measured mainly based on academic achievement (Dutrénit, 2014).

2.4.4. Competence Model

In general, in inclusive classrooms the alternative, the competency model, is only used by teachers to work collectively with children with disabilities. Westbrook et al. (2013) postulated that the competence model is based on invisible pedagogies in which the framing is weaker and this leads to a more informal approach. In this model the teachers are responding to the individual needs of individual children. This model aims to address the customised needs of individual children with disabilities. The competence model is highly focused towards hidden outcomes and is particularly used in special education institutions where teachers provide individualised education plans for children. This model generally is the method employed in exclusion education situations and is based on fulfilling special needs.

The competence model involves competency building in an individual child, and such customised programmes provided for children with disabilities can have a positive influence on their academic performance. Elements of the competence model can be seen in the KSA code of provision for persons with disabilities in that Article 2 Paragraph 5 indicates that people with special educational needs should be given social competency to be able to: ‘integrate naturally into various facets of public life without hindrance from the nature of their disability’ (Article 2, Paragraph 5). Although this is formally agreed upon and published as KSA policy, it describes a competence (and not a performance) outcome - therefore it could be difficult to measure and quantify useful outcomes. As a result any conclusion drawn may be complex and difficult to generalise to other children in other locations. A recent publication by two Saudi researchers (Al-Odaib and Al-Sedairy, 2014) indicates that there are some examples of good practice with respect to strategies, initiatives and

programmes to help individuals with disabilities in the KSA. They describe core values and a provision code, and discuss the rights of children with disabilities in Islam, but this is principally a medical publication, rather than one specifically addressing the education of children with disabilities.

Thus it can be said that the KSA is aware of current practice concerning the education of young children with disabilities, exclusion versus inclusion, integration versus inclusion, performance versus competencies. However, evidence from the KSA is limited; this renders my investigation of the current situation highly significant.

2.5. Policy

A national inclusive educational system is possible, if a country can develop and implement effective policies within the general educational provision. When dealing with any government policy there are always issues of governance, and this is clearly presented in the work of Price (2010) who explains that there are many different ways of assessing the success of an educational policy, although finding the real causes of failure is always difficult. This researcher's results tend to show that failing schools may be failing because they are labelled as such, rather than because they are failing to implement educational policy (ibid.). In fact, she found that often there was clustering of schools with more SEN children, and these schools were not doing as well as others. It can therefore be concluded that policy does matter, and, in the sphere of education, it is very important for researchers to analyse the implementation of policy, as well as how to direct it, and to provide advice on how to govern it. This would be particularly important in the context of working with children with disabilities. In the following section, I describe the current Saudi Arabian policy with respect to the education of SEN children.

2.5.1. Policy with respect to education and SEN in the KSA

As I discussed in Chapter one section 1.3, the development of education policy in the KSA is the main responsibility of the MOE. One aim of the present education policy is to promote inclusion of all children, in keeping with the strong influence of Islam,

as the rules of the country make it essential to teach Islam throughout the curriculum. The stated aims of the KSA Early Years' Education policy are described by Al Hamid et al. (2005) as follows:

- 1. The planning of education and the use of methods of instruction in a manner that is in harmony with the teachings of Islam and derives from its principles.*
- 2. The provision of basic religious instruction throughout the period of education, from basic through higher education.*
- 3. Given every individual's desire for knowledge, the state must - within the limits of its resources and abilities - give the opportunity to everyone, male or female, to acquire that knowledge.*
- 4. Within the dictates of Islam, turning to account all forms of useful human knowledge so as to develop the community and improve its way of life.*
- 5. The methodology, writing and teaching of science and learning and their various forms and sources must be in accord with an Islamic orientation.*
- 6. The linking of education and instruction at all levels with overall national development planning.*
- 7. The judicious use of interaction with international developments in the fields of science, culture and literature.*
- 8. The use of the Arabic language as the language of instruction in all subjects and at all levels, except where it is necessary for teaching to be in another language (for example, language courses) Al Hamid et al. (2005, p, 143).*

Al Mengash (2006) examines these aims by looking at educational legislation from a Saudi perspective. When he investigated the implementation of the above policy in the country, he found that neither schools nor teachers have been impacted greatly by it, perhaps due to a lack of awareness among staff members. The challenge is therefore how to overcome the lack of knowledge regarding the present policy and its

applications (Al Mengash, 2006). Bin Obaid (2009) claims that the lack of policy implementation is influenced by absences of guidance, supervision and financial support. There has been regular progress to improve educational provision in the country, but of course, any impact of an education policy may not become evident until years after implementation, and it is invariably dependent on other evolving trends and policies (Maroun et al., 2008).

Al-Mengash (2006) also discusses policy formulation and implementation from a Saudi perspective, underlining the importance of clearly writing and articulating the rules. This author has written that if policy is not clearly specified it can become a waste of time, money and effort. Al-Romy (2002) emphasises the importance of moving quickly from policy formulation to adoption to implementation.

A policy is a guideline for decision makers at many different management levels; however, it must be decided exactly who will be affected by a policy and who will be responsible for applying each procedure included. Effective implementation necessitates consideration of factors including the availability of adequate funding, useful databases and information systems. According to Al-Kadhi (1980), a Saudi policy should be suitable and appropriate for the social, political and economic status of the country; be realistic and achievable; have in place educational research and supervisory departments; and be openly available to all stakeholders. For example, regarding educational policy related to ICT, there should be assurances about adequate resourcing of hardware and software, qualified personnel, and in-service training (Tawalbeh, 2001). In the KSA, funding may be readily available, but qualified personnel may be less so (Al-kshrami, 2004).

The KSA has seen significant progress in the reform of many spheres of education, including those involving children with special educational needs. However, it is considered that this progress has not been uniform across all schools. A good example of variability is within the sphere of special education, where both special schools and inclusive schools continue to exist. On the whole, Saudi Arabia's views towards children with disabilities have been and continue to be positive (Al-Moussa, 2007). The Ministry of Education (2005) established several policies of how children with disabilities are to be included within any educational provision. The provisions can

include a specialised resource room, with equipment to meet the SEN children's needs. However, if a school does not have an available resource room then it should transfer the child to a facilitated school that has the required equipment and can provide transportation. Finally, any newly admitted SEN children should be included according to their needs in the same class with their peers for at least 50% of their time.

In order that these policies can be implemented the MOE established a scheme of mobile SEN teachers who could visit multiple schools. The workload of the mobile SEN teachers is set by the number of SEN children, their needs, and the distance between each of the schools. Al Hamid et al., (2005) state that this scheme was established because the MOE estimated that over 20% of the Saudi learners required some assistance. Where pre-schools exist, they also have shown progress towards inclusion.

The Saudi MOE concluded in 1996 that at least 5% of mainstream school children have special educational needs or need special attention at some point during their education. At that time, therefore, the MOE put a special policy in place to encourage the application of inclusive principles, enabling most SEN children to successfully attend mainstream schools. The inclusion of SEN children in these schools has many advantages, and these are not only economic (Al-Moussa, 2007). In the KSA, when SEN children are integrated into mainstream schools, they can often be closer to their homes, live at home with their families, and mix with a range of children. This is important, as the KSA is geographically large and travel times can therefore be long. As children are integrated into normal schools, children are not seen as 'odd' by their peers (Al-Moussa, 2007), helping children to have a realistic and positive outlook on life and school. This can be inherently motivating, helping them to attain good grades, and improving their quality of life.

The Deputy Manager of the government SEN programme added some important recommendations, based upon research in this field (MOE, 2012). These suggestions include the training of teachers in special educational needs, thereby preparing them to more effectively take advantage of modern technology methods to serve the interests of individuals with learning difficulties. The government has even produced

specific educational programmes for some categories of children. Recently, the private sector and private schools have also become significantly more important in this area, particularly in terms of the provision of support for special education (Al-Rashid, 2007). It can be seen that there have been many improvements in the policy of special education and its implementation in both private and mainstream pre-schools. However, there is still a substantial lack of awareness from many school staff members about policy implementation. This can be attributed to the fact that the Ministry of Education in the KSA does provide workshops and training for school staff, but these workshops do not run on a regular basis. In addition, there is no regular communication between the MOE and private pre-schools in the KSA in terms of any updates of policy and its implementation. Thus, in the current research I further explore this discrepancy between policy and practice in greater detail in the findings chapter.

2.5.2. The inclusion of SEN in KSA schools

In the KSA, special schools have existed since the 1960s, when schools for blind, deaf and children with mental disabilities were established. The inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools began in 1983, although only in a limited number of schools, due to increases in the numbers of individuals with disabilities and an increased awareness about the need to offer them equal educational opportunities (Al-Hano, 2006). By 1991, inclusion was widespread in the major cities of Riyadh, Makkah, and in the east of the KSA (Al-khashrami, 2004). It is hoped that this has and will continue to change the perceptions of citizens towards individuals with disabilities and promote social inclusion. In 1996, the MOE implemented a special needs education policy to promote inclusion, encouraging SEN children to enjoy education amongst their peers (Al-Moussa, 2007).

The SEN schools in the KSA continue to provide benefits for attendees. However, they are widely distributed. Al-Rubiyeh (2010) interviewed parents of SEN children and found that transportation was a cause of worry and concern for a fifth (19%) of all respondents, as distances can be significant in the KSA. Consequently, the government has permitted some SEN children to live at home, instead of requiring

residence at special schools, and some special schools are providing free transportation for children (Al-Rubiyea, 2010). The KSA invested £380 million in 2012 in supporting individuals with special educational needs across the country; 25% of this budget was used in the development of the services and facilities provided to SEN children in schools (MOF, 2012). The distribution of these funds provides that children with mental disabilities acquired 42.7% of the allocated budget, followed by those with learning difficulties, then hearing disabilities, and finally those with physical disabilities (32.4%, 11.9% and 0.7%, respectively) (MOF, 2012). The large budget for children with mental disabilities may reflect the additional tools, resources, staff training and staff salaries required; however, given that no official statement has been released on this matter, only empirical research can determine the answer conclusively. For example, children with physical disabilities often also require expensive equipment and professional assistance, so it may be the case that the government assumes that parents would cover these costs. As a whole, for each individual with disabilities, the KSA government provides an annual allowance of approximately £9,000 for funding rehabilitation schemes, such as day-care centres for children aged three to 12 years (JICA, 2002). The Saudi government provides financial resources for its inclusion policy, which are considered essential for this policy to succeed.

In 2008, slightly fewer than 9,000 children with disabilities were in mainstream programmes in schools, approximately 4,000 were taught by teachers in schools with mainstream programmes, a further 5,600 were learning in schools without a mainstream programme, and around 4,600 were receiving their education in special education institutes (Al-Mousa, 2008).

This evidence suggests that there is a good inclusion policy in the KSA, but its implementation requires better access and capacity-building mechanisms (MOE, 2011). A school must offer access to all children, first by determining the specific needs of individual children, even if these needs are outside the norm. According to the MOE (2012), appropriate materials that are suitable for the curriculum should also be provided, based upon the cognitive level and language ability of each individual child, as well as their physical factors such as health, and many additional social and cultural factors. Materials should be distributed effectively according to need, rather

than uniformly. The second major factor in inclusion is the teachers themselves, including their pedagogic and professional backgrounds and values, as well as their ability to adapt. For example, conducting learner-centred teaching may be difficult for those who only have teacher-centred backgrounds (Davies et al., 2009). There is current research involving the teaching profession and the issue of inclusion in the KSA, and this may help to improve policy implementation with respect to SEN children.

2.5.3. The importance of inclusive Early Years' Education in the KSA

The quality of the early years' education provided to children aged three to six in the UK was assessed by the Early Years and Transitional Special Educational Needs (EYTSSEN) longitudinal study undertaken by Sammons et al. (2003). The evidence was that early years' education is significant as an indicator of SEN being developed in a child by the end of their first year in compulsory education. In the report, the teachers indicated that 42% of the children who had not received any pre school education had special education needs, whereas this was true for only around 25% of previous early years' children (Sammons et al., 2003: 6). Although this difference is significant for the UK, it may be difficult to draw firm conclusions that can be used in the Saudi early years' educational setting, as there almost certainly would be different issues surrounding non-attendance.

As discussed in the introduction chapter, in the KSA the attendance at early years' education is low and this is a significant issue for the KSA government. This is indicated by the MOE's (2014) project to make early years' education compulsory for all Saudi children aged from four to six. This was to be achieved by providing vouchers for those children who could not be allocated a state place and the vouchers could be used in the private sector (MOE, 2014). This aim is achievable for children with disabilities if the educational provision is made accessible and suitable for both the children and their families. Widening of participation is thought to facilitate early identification, exploration and intervention of sensory issues in special needs (MOE, 2014).

According to Alameen et al. (2015), the Saudi Arabian school system is gender-segregated, with the exception of the early years. Early years' provision is either private or state funded, but both are under the management of the MOE. Although pre-school education is still not compulsory, the government does provide state funded pre-schools. In both the state and private education sectors, leadership approaches are being used to provide quality education for children. However, KSA education is currently going through an important transformation in which leadership roles and responsibilities have become a main issue. Early years' education is one of the goals for improvement with a large budget allocated for training, buildings, policies and curriculum. Therefore, the local decision making has been afforded better opportunities from the central government to maximise the policy intentions signalled in the development plan for education (Alameen et al., 2015).

Al-Khazamy (2009) states that inclusion of SEN children within the KSA's early years' education system began in 2001 with deaf children included in four state schools in Riyadh. The government established a policy which stated that 20% of the children in all early years' settings should be provided with special education, that each class should have no more than four children with diagnosed SEN, and that only two types of disability were to be contained within the same class (Al-Khazamy, 2009:171). Although this written policy should have increased the participation of SEN children in early years' education, without the required facilities and trained staff, there was a lack of actual inclusion (Al-Khazamy, 2009)

Today, pre-school education in the KSA is neither universal nor inclusive (Alameen et al., 2015). Improving this situation would require the consideration of many factors at both the macro and micro levels (Ikeda, 2012). For example, how can adults be made more aware of disability (Lyons, 2013), how can teachers learn when to intervene (Kevser, 2012), and how can the quality of inclusive education be improved (Grisham-Brown et al., 2009; Hestenes et al., 2008)? Three important factors influencing the implementation and progression of inclusion in pre-schools are key personnel, particularly teachers and principals; the shared vision of teachers who have common philosophies and/or integrated approaches to instruction; and appropriately designed policies at national and state levels (Nonis, 2006). I consider these three criteria in this current work about current pre-school practice in the KSA. However,

only a minimal amount of previous research exists on the topic of inclusion in Saudi pre-schools, whether in English or Arabic.

In the KSA, currently, no formal teacher training is given in special education needs, except in the case of full SEN teacher training (four years), which is offered by Saudi universities (MOHE, 2009). In 2004, there were 708 SEN specialised teachers (Al-khashrami, 2004), but only 50% of these were from the KSA (Al-khashrami, 2004). Despite large financial investments into the development of special education needs in schools, the KSA is still facing a number of important limitations. Awareness of the problems facing disability inclusion came to light after studies conducted by both local and international researchers (Al-Otaibi, 2006; JICA, 2002), which demonstrated a failure to comprehensively ensure the rights of children with disabilities to be included in the educational system.

One of the important components of the research presented here is the exploration of variables related to the development of an inclusion policy for children with disabilities/SEN in pre-schools in the KSA. Such concerns, if appropriate, might raise questions about the competencies and skills needed by in-service regular and special education teachers to teach effectively in inclusive pre-schools. It may also raise concerns about pre-service training at university in teacher education programmes and how these programmes can affect pre-service teachers' perspectives of inclusion. I discuss these aspects in detail in the findings chapter.

2.5.4. Shared vision

Islam is central to policy in the KSA, and the concept of equality has been and should continue to be emphasised in the education policy of the Saudi government. The concepts of social justice, capacity building and inclusion should also be given due consideration, as laid out by much of the literature cited above. The Saudi government states that it has given consideration to the education of all children. However, there is a dearth of research on the provision for children with disabilities in pre-schools in the country, with some studies indicating that this provision seems to be restricted to specialist institutions; moreover, the programmes devised for these children

emphasise physical rehabilitation rather than comprehensively meeting the educational needs of children (Al-Melaik, 2001). Al Thani (2007) argues that for inclusive education to be effective in the KSA, policy changes should be accompanied by changes in the training of pre-school practitioners. The changes in teacher training could then be communicated to the children in the pre-school classroom.

At present in the KSA, early interventions are available for children with disabilities; however, these services are relatively underdeveloped and underutilised (Merza, 2012), potentially due to a lack of awareness or cultural issues, such as the role of families in caring for members with disabilities (ibid.). There are indications that the Saudi government is moving towards developing research centres for inclusion of children with disabilities (MOE, 2011). I explore this issue in detail in the current study. However, my investigation is challenged by the relative scarcity of literature on what is being done and its degree of success, particularly with respect to specialised topics like inclusion in pre-schools (Bin Obaid, 2009). As a consequence, this study sets out to determine and analyse the current situation regarding the rights of children with disabilities in relation to inclusion in pre-schools in the KSA, and to make suggestions for improvement where possible. Through these kinds of focused studies and by including the precepts of equality as laid down in the Qur'an, it is hoped that meaningful change can be effected in Saudi society.

2.6. Summary

This chapter has reviewed the extant literature relating to the key concepts and issues which form the basis of this study, and also included are reports of empirical research, international rights literature, theory and Saudi policy. I have analysed the definition of inclusion with reference to this literature and discussed the themes of human rights and inclusion. I have given the context of the KSA special attention, with particular focus on the situation there concerning children with disabilities. I have compared the KSA and various international contexts: these range from Western countries, which have long and established records of engaging proactively with issues of rights and inclusion, to the KSA where attempts at policy to address these issues are more recent.

The following chapter introduces the empirical phase of this study. I first provide an outline for the design of this research, and explicate the chosen approaches to data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research philosophy, approach, design, methods and data analysis tools employed in this study. Using the research questions proposed in the introduction chapter, this study focuses on possible discrepancies between what is stated as KSA national policy and the actual practice. As with most countries, there are specific rules and regulations involved in conducting research in the KSA. For example, in order to conduct research in education in Saudi Arabia, permission must be obtained from the central government. In addition to this, certain methodological issues that do not occur in most countries, such as gender segregation, must be also managed. To further complicate matters, as discussed in previous chapters, a limited amount of research exists in the KSA within this area of study. Thus, one aim of this study is to provide further research-based information in order to inform national policy and promote future investigations on pre-schooling in the KSA.

I have selected to use a case study approach when investigating the extent to which the pre-schools I visited were practicing inclusion. Case studies have been used in many research studies (Yin, 2014) and the approach is well accepted in academic circles, including those involving education. In my case, each pre-school can be considered as an individual case. Adults (parents and staff), children, the setting and the context can all be included in the case. More than one method of analysis has been used, and both qualitative and quantitative evidence was included.

According to Thomas (2011), one needs to first identify the purpose of the study (e.g., to explore and/or to evaluate), the techniques to be used, the time frame, and how analysis is to be done. In this research, the case studies can be considered to be evaluative; questionnaires, interviews and observations were disseminated and carried out over a short period of time; and analysis involved using triangulation. By visiting four pre-schools in the KSA, I can present evidence, which can be useful in assessing the present situation and planning for the future.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the research philosophy (i.e. ontology and epistemology) that underpins the methodology of this study. I then discuss the research approach and research design, followed by a rationale for the selection of the mixed methods approach. The rationale for applying case study as my research strategy is provided in detail along with a consideration of the ethical implications of the study, and the procedures followed in order to meet the requirements of the University of Roehampton.

The following section outlines the sample that I have chosen for use in the study, in conjunction with the procedures undertaken to reduce bias and ensure representation of diversity in the sample I then state the features associated with documentary analysis, which are justified in the context of this study, after which details are given of the data-reduction, data-display and drawing-conclusion phases. Following this, a detailed explanation is provided on the use of the chosen research techniques (questionnaires, interviews and observations) in gathering information relevant to the study. Finally, a description is given of the steps taken to ensure the validity of data gathered.

3.2. Research philosophy

This research is interpretive, intending ‘to understand the subjective world of human experience’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 21). In this sense, the nature of reality in the interpretative paradigm is based on three fundamental assumptions: epistemological, ontological and methodological (Cohen et al., 2007).

The epistemology focuses on what establishes acceptable knowledge in the area of the topic under investigation, and specifies the nature of the association between the investigated phenomenon and the researcher. This research is grounded in the existing approaches and policies relating to the rights of children with disabilities. Using this as a starting point enables further investigation and comparison of the current levels of inclusion in pre-schools in the KSA, providing the opportunity to determine any relative differences between policy and implementation. Thus, this research attempts to understand further the extent to which policy has been enacted in pre-school

education in Saudi Arabia and to emphasise any tensions arising from culture, structure and policy.

In terms of the ontological assumption within the context of this study, it shaped the need to uncover the reality perceived by participants in four pre-schools of their inclusive education and their broad culture. This meant that the method needs to allow for understanding and exploring the complexities of inclusive education for SEN children in the social world of head teachers' pre-schools, teachers and parents, to gain an explanation of attitude and knowledge towards SEN Saudi policy and its impact on implementation. In this sense, an objective ontology asserts that social components exist in reality. However, a subjective ontology asserts that social events are generated out of the social opinions of the social actors. This research perceived the attitude and knowledge of stakeholders, educational facilities, and teachers experience and background as observable external realities (Punch, 2009).

According to Bryman (2012), the researcher must consider these assumptions as a multi-dimensional set of continuous elements, which is more suitable than considering them as different positions. The multi-dimensional concept is accepted in this research, because although the majority of the data are qualitative in nature they are triangulated by quantitative data; thus the philosophy of my research utilises a mixed method design.

The research process began with indicative thinking because this approach is particularly suitable for phenomena under investigation in terms of SEN policy and implementation. Following the work of Punch (2009), Cohen et al. (2007), and Yin (2009), I argue here that a qualitative approach would enable me to understand academic staff and parents in terms of their experiences, attitude and knowledge.

3.3. Research approach

This study investigated four pre-school settings in the KSA by means of a mixed methods approach, combining documentary/archival analysis, interviews, observations and self-administered questionnaires. From my prior knowledge of the KSA context, in addition to my knowledge of the relevant academic literature, this

approach seemed the optimal strategy to successfully determine the true level at which inclusion policies are being implemented in Saudi Arabian pre-school education. Denscombe (2002) asserts that mixed methods can improve the reliability of the data being collected, as it generates different datasets, which can be triangulated. With due consideration to all of these factors, a mixed methods approach was considered appropriate for this study and also to enhance the reliability of my findings.

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) claim that mixed methods approaches are an appropriate choice in research, as they allow for a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches during several stages of a single research study. Others (e.g., Briggs et al., 2012) argue that mixed methods can involve incompatible epistemologies, since one type of data is primarily quantitative/numerically based and the other qualitative/descriptively based. Hardy and Bryman (2004) argue against this notion and instead highlight similarities and commonalities between the two types of data. They state that quantitative and qualitative data are both based on data reduction, involving the processing of large amounts of data to reduce it to a focused core necessity, such as statistical analysis and thematic derivation for quantitative and qualitative data (ibid.).

In this study, the wider forces of SEN policy structures, as well as the structure and impact of tensions arising from the KSA culture concepts of children with disabilities and their parents towards inclusion are considered. I also considered the possible impact of the learning environment in terms of facilities and resources on SEN children and selected an appropriate methodology and research tools to encourage participation and open dialogue. In order to investigate the learning environment effectively as a theme, I utilised questionnaires and observations, thus, facilitating the observations of the reality within the learning facilities and available resources.

Another similarity in these approaches can be seen in the identification of links between data analysis and the literature review research phases, because both types of data are significant only when linked to extant research. Both forms of data collection also involve the determining of variations within data, and identifying factors that can cause variations in data lies at the root of generating research findings in both

quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Moreover, qualitative and quantitative data both aim to answer a set of research questions, despite the types of question perhaps being intrinsically different and qualitative research questions typically being more open-ended than quantitative research questions. Thus in this study I conducted a mixed method approach for three main reasons. The first was to address my research questions comprehensively and provide an in-depth view of the phenomena under investigation. The second was to establish a degree of data reliability through triangulation, and the third was to enhance the validity of the research findings and subsequently the generalisability of the research findings. Therefore these similarities between the types of data suggest that embedding them together in a mixed methods approach is feasible, and provides a comprehensive view of a research focus. I subscribe to the views of Hardy and Bryman (2004) in these respects. After detailed analysis, I found no significant issues of data incompatibility in the present study.

Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) praise the utilisation of mixed methods for providing a holistic and comprehensive understanding of research problems. The mixed methods approach focuses on the accumulation and analysis of rigidly qualitative and quantitative data, but then triangulate these two types of data. This ensures that the data have been collected and analysed thoroughly, while simultaneously producing comprehensive findings about the research question. Furthermore, the researcher can frame these techniques within both applied and theoretical approaches within one study (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011). Consequently, mixed methods are well suited to my study as they ensured that all research questions were thoroughly investigated and analysed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques.

As stated previously, the research questions for my study are as follows:

- A. To what extent have policies for the inclusion of SEN children been implemented in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia?
- B. What are the tensions arising from the interaction of Saudi Arabian culture, structure and SEN policy elements?

The introduction to the thesis and the literature review chapters both explored the existing approaches concerning children's rights and inclusion, as presented in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and under Islamic Shariah law. This exploration included a discussion of the degree to which these have been effectively implemented in many countries; this was an essential step in order to progress further to a determination of the implementation of SEN policy enacted for children with disabilities in the KSA.

Subsequently, a documentary/archival analysis was used to determine:

- i) The content of the Saudi government pre-school SEN policy ,
- ii) How the rights of the child and inclusion were viewed and reported ,
- iii) What literature currently existed regarding its implementation.

The documentary and archival analysis phases addressed research question A, while research question B was addressed through the use of interviews, observations and questionnaires. The interviews were conducted with government officials (n=1), head teachers (n=4), classroom practitioners (n=22), and parents (n=7). All interviews involved discussions concerning the rights of children with disabilities. The findings were analysed through coding processes appropriate for qualitative research.

In addition, in order to meet my research aims, I conducted extensive observation of practice in four school settings. Each school was visited for a period of 20 days. This observation schedule was organised on a rotational basis, alternating between two and three days each week. The use of observation enabled me to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment implementation for individual children with disabilities. This part of the study addressed research questions A and B. Further details regarding my approach to observation are presented in section 3.13.

Finally, a questionnaire was administered to teachers (n=100) who were working in pre-schools. Of the 100 initial requests, a total of 70 responses were received. This provided additional data relating to the views of teachers in establishing equality in pre-schools, in responding to research questions A and B.

In the following section, the methods used to answer the two research questions is discussed in greater detail. Yin (2009:7-8) argues that '[e]very research method can be used for three purposes namely, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory'. Each of these three purposes is used as a focus in this research study, although it is intentionally more focused on exploratory and explanatory goals than descriptive ones, since the stated aim is to investigate the concept of inclusion for pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA. These three elements are discussed in the next paragraph.

3.4. Research design

The research design is not just a research plan of the empirical part of the study; rather, it consists of multi-layered decisions and issues. The design covers all research issues ranging from theoretical reading and methodological choices, through to the empirical data-gathering, analysis and writing processes (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Figure 3 graphically represents the research process according to the design, collection, and analysis stages.

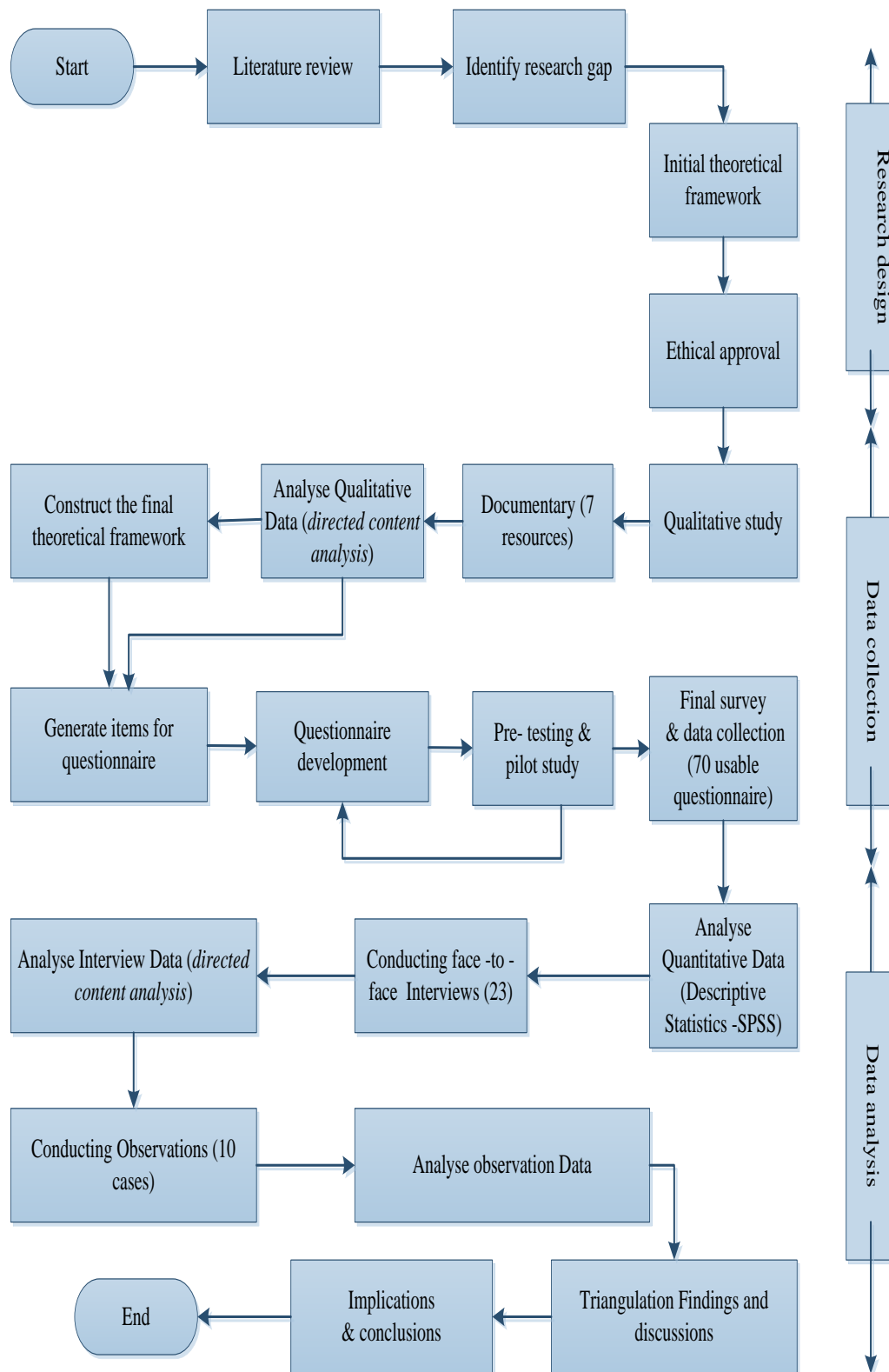


Figure 3: Research design

This study examines the gaps between the reality and inclusion of children with special education needs in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia. Hence, for this reason, the

study design entailed four phases. By following this process, every phase was able to offer additional data to this study. The aim of the initial, documentary phase was to explore the content of the Saudi inclusion policy, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (UNICEFb, 2012) and Islamic Shariah law. The aim of the second phase was to define the demographic profile of the participants, schools, facilities and the attitude of the teachers towards Saudi policy and the UN Convention in the main questionnaire. The purpose of the third interview phase was to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' views of inclusion; and the purpose of the final observation phase was to witness the reality by observing the cases directly. Table 2 presents the four research tools I adapted in this research; documentary, questionnaire, interview and observation.

Table 2: Research tools and layers of analysis

Data resources	Analysis approach	tool used for analysis	Layers of analysis	Purpose
Documentary	Systemic analysis	Manual	Initial analysis of the documentary data produced provisional results.	To identify the key national and international policy components currently in place.
Questionnaire	Descriptive analysis	SPSS	Analysis of the questionnaire aimed to both triangulate and further explain the provisional results of the documentary analysis.	To identify the views of large group of teachers towards including children with disabilities in pre-schools.
Interviews	Systemic analysis	Manual	The outcomes from the analysis of the interviews and the	To determine the views, feelings and opinions of teachers and parents
Observation	Systemic analysis	Manual	observations were then used to enable further triangulation to be carried out and more detailed explanations of the provisional outcomes to be produced.	To observe and identify the interactions between staff members and SEN children.

3.5. Framework of analysis

In terms of the framework of analysis, data emerging from the documentary analysis were used as the priority data strand throughout (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Subsequent analysis allowed triangulation and further explanations to be made. Initial analysis of the documentary data enabled a series of provisional outcomes to be identified. Subsequently, analysis of the questionnaire took place in order to both triangulate and further explain the provisional outcomes of the documentary analysis. The outcomes from the analysis of the interviews and the observations were then used to enable further triangulation to be carried out and more detailed explanations of the provisional outcomes to be produced (Creswell, 2009).

3.6. The rationale for using case study

This research employs the case study approach to understand the case under investigation in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising both the complexity and the context of the research domain (Punch, 2009). (Stake, 2013 p, 258) defines the case study as

‘ a study of a bounded system, emphasising the unity and wholeness of that system, but confining attention to those aspects that are relevant to the research problem at the time ‘

The use of a case study approach as part of my research was primarily influenced by the fact that in addition to the explanatory nature of case studies, they can also be a very useful tool when it comes to describing the environment in which the research takes place (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, the author emphasises that one of the main advantages of using a case study as a research tool is that they allow for the opportunity to answer to the questions of the “how”? and” why”? (ibid). This is contrary to other research methods such as surveys (ibid) which focus mainly on the “what” and “where” aspects of the research. Some argue that one possible strength is that data collection for case study can also utilise various types of evidence (Cohen et

al., 2007) and can thus be readily understood by the intended audience, aiding appreciation of how ideas, principles and practicalities interrelate, thus integrating theory and practice (Golby, 1994). Moreover, according to Yin, a good case study should use multiple sources of evidence (2014). Additionally, the case study can be an effective technique when conducting exploratory and explanatory research. Thus, I adopted a case study approach in order to benefit fully from the use of multiple methods of data collection techniques.

The use of a case study in my research was based on the guidelines reported by Myers (1997) including the following four stages:

- Determining the current situation – this stage was achieved through contacting the head of the SEN department of the Ministry of Education.
- Gathering information on the background of the current situation – this stage was achieved through the use of questionnaires.
- Gathering more specific data – this stage was achieved through in-depth exploration of the teachers' perspectives by conducting interviews in addition to conducting observations.
- Presenting an analysis of findings and recommendations for future actions – this stage was achieved through the development of the final research report to be provided to, and discussed with the Ministry of Education.

Hamilton and Whittier (2013) discuss the ability of case studies to include data from all sources including documentation, interviews and observations. They theorise that while other research methods such as the afore-mentioned interviews are almost completely based on the point of view of the subject, case studies can process a wide range of data sources and data types. This further emphasises Gilham (2000) conclusion that case studies are not subjected to bias as they include the points of view of different subjects; these being the interviewee, the researcher, or the subject of the research.

The commonly stated disadvantages of the case study include the reliability of generalising from a specific instance and the difficulty of cross-checking the findings, thus laying the research open to accusations of observer bias (Cohen et al., 2007).

Therefore, Yin (2009) argues that multiple case study strategies should be given consideration over that of a single case. Moreover, due to the nature of my study which aims to identify the tensions arising from the current situation of inclusion in pre-schools, it was therefore essential to employ a multiple case study strategy in order to obtain the necessary data to answer the “what” and “how” questions of this study.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Before conducting the field study, formal approval was obtained from the University of Roehampton, Research Ethics Committee. The University has its ethical codes in place which protects all individuals participating in the research.

It is the responsibility of researchers to ensure that they do not negatively impact upon the stakeholders, including taking into consideration their privacy, anonymity and consent (Keller and Lee, 2003). Therefore, these ethical principles were carefully considered at every stage.

This research was based on children with disabilities in four selected pre-schools, as well as on the views of their parents, teachers and head teachers. Firstly, four pre-schools were sought who were willing to participate. Since this research involved the investigation of a very sensitive topic with very vulnerable subjects, it was necessary to observe a high level of data confidentiality at all times. This commitment to care was made alongside adherence to the stringent ethical guidelines stated herein. Although this research was conducted in Saudi Arabia, the UK ethics code of practice (BERA, 2004) was still employed in the research, as specified in the BERA guidelines. Additionally, permission was obtained from the Saudi Ministry of Education (see Appendix 2, although this text is in Arabic).

The questionnaire’s front page clearly stated the main purpose of this research and demonstrated the researcher’s commitment to retaining the confidentiality of the data collected from the participants and using it solely for research purposes. Moreover, I informed all potential participants that providing personal details or participating in the research was not mandatory and that personal details would be used only for

statistical representation of the whole sample, rather than at an individual level. During the next stage, data collection, I considered the following ethical relationships with the study's participants, guided by Bryman and Bell (2011):

- (1) The research did not disadvantage the participants of the study in any way, such as physical or mental stress or impact in a negative way on their employment or career.
- (2) The researcher provided all participants with clear and detailed information relating to the purpose of the study and provided an appropriate opportunity for them to give their informed consent to participate.
- (3) All participants were notified of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without giving reason and without being disadvantaged in any way.
- (4) The researcher respected the privacy of the individuals participating in this study. All responses and personal details were kept confidential at all times and at all stages of the research.
- (5) The researcher did not engage in deceitful acts, nor alter or hide the objective of this study.
- (6) At all times, the researcher complied with all appropriate protocols, including selecting a convenient place and time, and also obtaining permission to audio record the discussion session.

An information sheet and consent form were produced and translated into Arabic, and were given to each participant taking part in the interviews and/or filling out the questionnaires. Their participation depended upon their consent and each was informed that they could withdraw at any stage; they were also advised that they could withdraw their data. The anonymity of participants was preserved at all times: all data obtained were kept locked in the author's home office and in computer files, secured using an undisclosed password. In accordance with the University of Roehampton's ethical guidance, a hardcopy version of the files will be securely stored for seven years in a locked filing cabinet.

The most vulnerable participants in this study were the children with disabilities in the schools that were observed. As stipulated by the BERA guidelines for working with children, an information sheet and a consent form were produced for the parents of the children under observation and for the heads of the schools. The participation of

the children required the consent of both their parents and school heads. I made every effort to ensure that there was no disruption to class or activity schedules at any time, or that no awkwardness or discomfort for children or teachers resulted from my presence in the classroom. If a child had experienced discomfort, I would have discontinued the observation immediately; however this did not occur. As stated above, participants were given an ongoing opportunity to withdraw their consent and participation during the course of the research (see Appendixes 4 and 5). At the end of my data collection stage all participants underwent a debrief session. This allowed all participants to discuss any issues arising from the data collection or to ask for any issues to be clarified. All participants were also offered the opportunity to view the interpretation of their data prior to thesis submission; however, in the event all participants declined this offer, but requested to see the final copy of the completed research presented to KSA libraries.

Finally, while the University of Roehampton's ethical guidelines advise that researchers conducting studies involving children in the UK must undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, there is no such mechanism available in the KSA, and a CRB check was therefore not required.

3.8. Positionality

It is essential to acknowledge my role as a researcher and potential impact in undertaking this research. Therefore, as my own positionality emerges from my own experiences, this will inevitably impact on the way in which I interpret data as well as influence my understanding of a situation, my motivation and questioning, and ultimately, my conclusions (Cohen et al., 2011). For that reason, there is a position that needs consideration here: namely, that I come to this piece of research acknowledging my own position and background as a mother of children with disabilities, which means that I am both an insider and an outsider of this topic. I understood that doing research in this area would be physically, emotionally and psychologically challenging and draining. Nevertheless, I had a strong belief that this research was important, that it needed to be done in order to evaluate and improve the Saudi SEN policy implementation, and that my experience and viewpoint could

provide a valuable perspective and I believe that my contribution can contribute to the current gaps in the literature. My position as a mother of children with disabilities provided me with experience and understanding due to my having met similar challenges and therefore there were times when I positioned myself clearly with the participants (mothers in particular). Thus, at all times, I took care to set clear boundaries and reiterated that my role was not to control but to guide and listen by enabling a safe space for the participants to express their perceptions.

It is important to mention that my position as a lecturer had limited impact on this research, as I was not in a position of authority or dominance for two reasons: (1) I was a lecturer in the university and the research was conducted in pre-schools, and (2) the data were collected from pre-schools in Jeddah City and I am working as a lecturer in Riyadh City. As a result, I argue that my impact on the students', teachers and parents' perceptions was limited and therefore the impact on the results of this research was relatively low. However, my position as a lecturer helped me to be aware of the educational environment in terms of rules and procedures. This awareness helped me to carry out the interview sessions and observation smoothly and in a completely professional way.

Being a woman in the KSA required additional effort for me as a researcher. Initial approval for the project was prolonged because of procedures, which consequently left a very short time to collect data. Most decisions of this type are in the hands of males and therefore, due to cultural issues, females are not allowed access to the MOE male department. Therefore, in order to gain the approval from the MOE I had to send a male member of my family (my brother) to obtain the signature from the head of the department of schools.

Another issue I faced as a researcher during this research was the distance. I was based throughout in the UK as a student and I have other responsibilities as a mother of five children (four of them were attending schools in London). Thus travelling during the academic year to the KSA to collect my data and leaving my children without my supervision and care was the most challenging issue I faced. However, in order to balance these two major responsibilities I recruited some additional support from my family in Saudi.

3.9. Sample

This study investigated the rights of children with disabilities at pre-schools in the city of Jeddah in the KSA. I was able to acquire a list of pre-schools practicing inclusion from the Saudi government. As the government provided financial support for the research, it was felt that the schools to be included should come from this list. Some of the pre-schools that were subsequently approached did not reply while others declined to participate. Some stated they did not have any children with disabilities at the present time (see Table 3).

Table 3: Qualitative sample - demographic profile of all four pre-schools

Demographics	Frequency
Children (4-6 years old)	603
Children with disability Physical disability Autistic Down Syndrome Deaf Blind	97
Private pre-school	2
State pre-school	2

In view of the fact that in-depth case studies were to be performed and the length of time that would therefore be needed at each pre-school, it was decided that four pre-schools would be studied. Once a visit had been conducted to the first pre-school to meet the criteria, this study then utilised the snowball sampling technique. Effectively, this means that the first pre-school recommended other willing participants, with the result that the case studies were able to access four pre-schools (two state and two private) and include a total of 70 teachers, plus a number of other interviewees (parents, academics and head teachers). In an attempt to minimise the degree of regional bias and to ensure that my data provide a wide picture of inclusive pre-school education in the KSA, the pre-schools selected were located in different geographical regions of Jeddah, some of which are more affluent than others. This was done in

order to attain a realistic view of policies being put into practice in different regional contexts – Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7.

Table 4 Demographic profiles of the participants in pre-school one

Demographics profile of the participants in pre-school one		Frequency
Children	Children	
	Psychical disability Autistic Down Syndrome Deaf Blind	53 out of 163
Opening hours		7am to 1:30 pm
Teachers		13
Classes		12
Age		Pre-school 4-6 years
Pre-School		Private pre-school

Table 5 : Demographic profile of the participants in pre-school two

Demographics profile of the participants in pre-school two		Frequency
Children	Children	
	Psychical disability Autistic Down Syndrome	22 out of 30
Opening hours		7am to 1: 30 pm
Teachers		14
Classes		3
Age		Pre-school 4-6 years
Pre-School		State pre-school

Table 6: Demographic profile of the participants in pre-school three

Demographics profile of the participants in pre-school three		Frequency
Children	Children	
	Deaf Blind	18 out of 140
Opening hours		7am to 1: 30 pm
Teachers		10
Classes		5
Age		Pre-school 4-6 years
Pre-School		State pre-school

Table 7: Demographics profile of the participants in pre-school four

Demographics profile of the participants in pre-school four		Frequency
Children	Children	
	Physical disability Autistic	4 out of 270
Opening hours		7am to 1:30 pm
Teachers		24
Classes		12
Age		Pre-school 4-6 years
Pre-School		Private pre-school

In order to fulfil the stated aims, this study used carefully selected principal social science research methods: documentary/archival analysis, surveys, interviews and observations. The underlying rationale for the selection of these approaches is discussed in the following sections.

3.10. Data analysis

3.10.1. Documentary

Briggs and Coleman (2007) state that the documentary analyses can retrieve data from a wide range of sources, including official letters, certificates, dialogues, websites data, curriculum books, policies and educational records. It may also include other written reports of events; administrative documents; proposals; progress reports; other internal records; formal studies or evaluations; news clippings, and other publicly published articles. Yin (2003: 87) asserts that: ‘Because of their overall value, documents play an explicit role in any data collection in doing case studies’. For example in this research I depend on the documentation to discover the current situation of SEN policy in the KSA. I then supported this information to avoid inferences by using other research methods such as interviews and observation in order to avoid inferences. The documentary sources analysed in this study included state policy documents; state and institutional documentation; institutional policy literature; the UNCRC, and Shariah law documentation, as outlined in Table 8.

Table 8 Documentation and Resources

Documentary data	Resource
1. The UN Convention	The UNCRC
2. Shari Law	Quran
3. Saudi educational policy	Ministry of Education website and UNIC reports
4. SEN educational policy	Ministry of Education website and books

Documentary analysis can help to answer many research questions. It does not involve any control of behavioural events, and may or may not focus on the present (Briggs et al., 2012). This approach is a form of qualitative analysis that necessitates a researcher to ‘locate, interpret, analyse and draw conclusions about the evidence presented’ (Briggs and Coleman, 2007: 279). Scott states that documents should be ‘studied as social situated products’ (1990: 34). In reflecting on the collected data in this study I was able to better determine and process the facts that emerged through documentary analysis to ensure a stringent and thorough thought process regarding the data accumulated.

Documentary analysis is utilised in the interrogation and classification of written documents within both public and private domains (Payne and Payne, 2004). There are two types of documentary sources, which are classified according to authorship: these are primary, which typically refer to first-hand witness accounts and are never analytical; and secondary, which describe published documents and often provide an interpretation of the topic (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Additionally, the reliability of sources must be determined prior to analysing the documents – this includes document credibility and representation. However, this step is not necessary for government policies that are obtained directly from government sources as they are authenticated and published by the state. Thus in this study I focused on the analysis of published government policies (as conducted in the UK context by researchers such as David et al. (2002).

Documentary evidence has several strengths, including its exactness and stability (Yin, 2009). For example, laws are published and stay in force until the law is changed. Documents are also available for all, and easily accessible (Williamson and Whittaker, 2011). However, I struggled to access some Saudi documents such as the

Arabic studies of the previous inclusion research as these were not available online. In order to overcome this obstacle I went to the relevant organisations to acquire these documents which was time consuming. In the context of laws and the implementation of laws, documents and comments are often published and readily publicly available, without requiring time-consuming stages in gaining access. Researchers are also generally able to repeatedly study and access the document at hand, so long as it remains accessible, without the element of time restrictions inherent to other data types (Anderson, 2004). Papers are produced by experts who can reach a wide audience. Other advantages include the wide span of time, events and settings involved in documentary evidence, and the fact that this evidence can be gained independently with little intrusion or interference. Finally, documentary analysis is often associated with low ethical risks as there are no participants involved (Williamson and Whittaker, 2011). Within the context of this study, I employed documentary analysis as an on-going, low-risk research phase that enabled an up-to-date version of the KSA education policy to be scrutinised alongside primary interview and observation data.

Scott (1990) argues that researchers should bear in mind that documents may not be considered as objective accounts, and that they therefore need to be cross-examined alongside other data. For that reason, in this research both interviews and observations were used in order to triangulate the documentary data. Furthermore, a disadvantage of using documentary evidence is that the evidence is sometimes difficult to obtain; documents may not be made available, may be difficult to find, or only a selected number of documents may be accessible.

3.10.2. Documentary data analyses

Qualitative data analysis of these documents required a systematic methodology of analysis, which could be applied to the data to derive patterns, themes and classifications (Boyatzis, 1998). This research also paid heed to the warning that when conducting qualitative research into professional practice the complexities involved in doing so should not be treated superficially (Stake, 2010). I therefore implemented the previous systematic approach to analyse the data which emerged from the

documentation. However, the choice of method used to analyse documents varies from researcher to researcher and, according to many, there is no universally agreement or correct method of doing so (Punch, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that documentary analysis requires the identification and analysis of stable relationships amongst social phenomena based on patterns and themes that link these phenomena. They recommend a widely adopted three-step process: data reduction, data display and developing and authenticating conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This analytical procedure is essentially spiral in nature and may take place in any particular order. – see Figure 4 (ibid.).

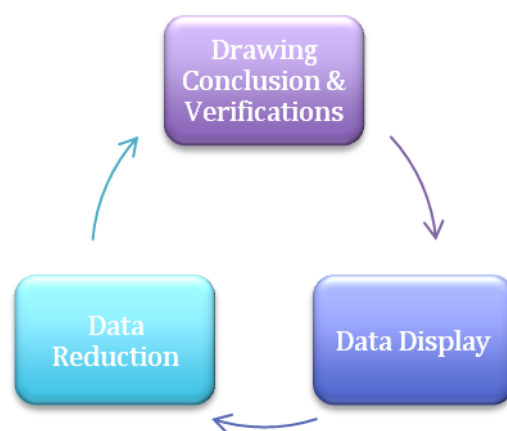


Figure 4: Three steps in successful documentary analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994:98)

3.10.3. Documentary data reduction

Data reduction is a process of simplifying information from one form to another by focusing, abstracting and selecting raw data and deciding which aspects of the data may act as the focal point (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The primary aim of data reduction is to distil and process data without losing information. In other words, this stage aims to select the most significant findings from the data. Data reduction ensures that the data are more manageable in terms of size and quantity, thus enabling me to extract themes and patterns from within them more easily. The time effectiveness and efficiency of this approach makes it particularly useful in qualitative research, due to the large amounts of data being handled. As discussed below, I

identified and selected significant information from my datasets using a system of coding.

Initially, data reduction occurs via progressive focusing. In this, the researcher gathers the data and views them through a wide lens. The raw data are then sorted, sifted through and reflected over (Cohen et al., 2007), by reading and re-reading until patterns and themes emerge. The next stage involves editing, sectioning, reviewing, and then identifying further patterns (Tesch, 1990). There are two methods for doing this: the first is through categorising strategies and the second involves contextualising strategies. Both techniques allow data to be seen from a different perspective, where the themes and emerging patterns appear as opposed to views portrayed by the document initially (Ahmed, 2010; Bazeley, 2007). Themes and patterns are then developed further via conceptualising and explaining (Ahmed, 2010). Categorising strategies involve coding, in which concepts and theories are extracted from the raw data and grouped together into a specific number of categories. In contrast, contextualising strategies treat the data as a whole, with the intention of preserving the whole context, as much as possible (Maxwell, 2005). Documentary analysis can involve both strategies; however, it is arguable that categorising strategies can result in a researcher moving away from the concrete data. Therefore, in an attempt to minimise or overcome this, the coding must be comprehensive and give due consideration to all raw data and their contexts (Monette et al., 2008). I utilised categorising strategies for this study, as contextualising strategies have been shown to sometimes induce researcher bias. Due to the nature of the data collected, coding was particularly well suited to this study due to the number of emerging themes.

Categorising strategies aim to draw concepts and theories from raw data and place these within a coded form. Coding reduces and simplifies the data whilst retaining the words and meanings within the data. Furthermore, codes and coding schemes can be drawn up from the data themselves at the stage of data collection (Monette et al., 2008). Consequently, coding plays an important role in conceptual development and theory building. This form of data reduction is also known as thematic analysis (Bryman, 2012). Through the emergence of codes and themes, a researcher is able to categorise portions of data, such as paragraphs or sentences. These can then be related

to one another, as well as to other areas of the data, ultimately focusing analysis on the key patterns that are emerging (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004).

Pattern coding was the approach chosen for the coding in this study, as it enhances exploratory aspect of the research (Yin, 2009), facilitating the identification of themes and codes as they emerged (Miles and Huberman, 1994), as opposed to employing pre-established categories. Miles and Huberman's evaluative criteria includes the consideration of objectivity, which led to my decision to avoid approaching any known pre-schools or staff that I knew personally, or who knew of me in turn, thereby protecting researcher neutrality. Another criterion concerns utilisation of the research – I was always attentive to the potential usefulness of my work for all the individuals involved (staff, parents and children). It also allowed for themes and codes to emerge naturally over a period of time. Monette et al. (2008: 438) state that pattern codes 'focus on four general categories of phenomena: themes, causes or explanation, relationships among people and theoretical constructs'. These categories tie in perfectly with the aims of this study where the relationships between people, causes and theoretical constructs have been studied. However, Monette et al. (2008) warn that pattern coding has the inherent risk of a researcher self-imposing a judgement on the data that may result in attempting to fit the data into a pattern. In order to overcome this problem, Miles and Huberman (1994) urge researchers to be flexible and to reconfigure themes as further patterns emerge from the data. The role that coding plays in the data analysis process is illustrated below (see Figure 5)

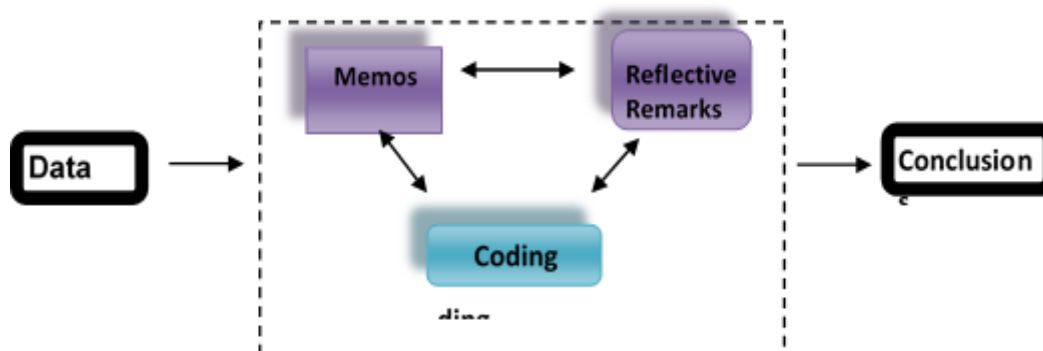


Figure 5 :The role that coding plays in data analysis

For this research study, I adopted the procedures outlined above in the analysis of documentary data sources, such as various Saudi government policies, institutional

policies, and human rights literature. Large amounts of documentary data were initially gathered, then the dataset was reduced by reading and re-reading the dataset in order to identify the significant elements and discarding the insignificant surplus data (a similar strategy was employed for interview and observation data). Once this was completed, I began the coding process, which took the form of systematically establishing thematic categories and identifying links between them.

3.10.4. Data display

After data reduction, the second stage of documentary analysis is data display (Miles and Huberman, 1994), which refers to the process of interpreting and presentation of the data that has been reduced. The most common form of data display employs the use of narrative text; however the most effective form of data display should promote further data analysis – hence the use of diagrams and charts plays an important role as they can be used to present data in accessible and illuminating ways which may lead to fresh insight (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data display provides researchers with in-depth understanding of the data, as well as highlighting the relationships between the various phenomena under investigation (Cohen et al., 2007). Most importantly, data display enables the triangulation of data, such that further themes and emerging patterns can be identified (Mason, 2007). I created tables to display the documentary data in coded form. I then designed and employed a schedule that referred to a coding table in which documents' key words and themes were recorded, as well as where questions were raised and answered from within the documents. Following this process, the themes provided a key for the reflection on any recurring ideas and topics within the data (Bryman, 2012), supporting the identification of issues pertinent to understanding the implementation of current Saudi policies within pre-schools.

This stage promoted analysis as it led me to read the data in relation to the themes they correspond to. I then presented the data in narrative form, according to the themes identified in the table in order to enhance readability. This data display employed for documentary, interview and observation data is presented in Chapter 4.

3.10.5. Drawing and verifying conclusions

The final stage of documentary analysis involved the drawing and verification of conclusions. This involved reviewing and examining the data in terms of the themes, patterns and questions raised. A comparison was then made of the data to cross-examine the findings and verify any emerging patterns and themes (Mason, 2007). Finally, the meanings and themes were verified for validity (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

In order to verify the conclusions drawn, I assessed whether they had been properly developed from a detailed description and understanding of the situation. In addition, with the emergence of themes and patterns, consideration should be given to potential rival conclusions and explanations (Monette et al., 2008). As the name suggests, rival conclusions include those that oppose the findings of the researcher. Therefore, this study stringently considered rival conclusions to ensure that the conclusions my study reached were verified. Effectively, when conclusions are clear and justifiable, then rival conclusions should be less likely to exist, as there will be minimal support within the data for them. Negative evidence and abnormal cases from the raw data should be considered. If none can be found, then the researcher has a strong justifiable case. Accordingly, I systematically reviewed the codes, giving consideration to whether alternative conclusions might be drawn. Following this process, I was satisfied with the justifiability of the study conclusions. This process was supported by my use of peer validation.

Combining the three aforementioned steps, thorough documentary analysis provides ‘a comprehensive and robust explanation of the successes and challenge of implementing inclusion initiatives’ (Marshall and Rossman, 1995:129). Thus, documentary analysis allowed for the location, interpretation, analysis and the drawing of conclusions from current Saudi policies, and international human rights literature (Briggs and Coleman, 2007). Once clear research questions had been set, I then commenced documentary analysis (see Questions A and B). Documentary analysis was particularly valuable for determining the contingencies and rules implemented by the Saudi government to support inclusion for pre-school children with disabilities. This technique also yielded information accumulated by government

reviews and inspections surrounding this topic. Finally, conclusions were reached about the amount of information available, how precise it was, where it could be found, and who could be contacted about its authenticity. A total of four documents were read and translated if needed (see Table 8), after which they were coded and then analysed according to the methods mentioned above.

It is also relevant to note that almost all Saudi documents analysed were written in Arabic and therefore had to be translated into English. This was done prior to any analysis of the documentation. There are certain inherent problems commonly associated with translation. For example, Alousque (2009) writes about the difficulties involved in translating cooking terms from French into English and other languages. Alousque (2009) notes that there are many terms used in cooking, many of which are known to non-French speakers, which require knowledge of the cultural background before they can be translated, especially as many of these words are part of cultural domains, encoding more than simply cooking instructions. Errors in translation can also potentially occur as a result of differences in cultural concepts, which results in the loss of primary meaning. All of these factors contribute to translation often being a rather challenging task. I am a native speaker of Arabic, possessing excellent knowledge of written and spoken Arabic, as well as having a functional knowledge of the English language. In addition, I also had support from friends and colleagues who were able to assist in interpreting what was written and how it might be best expressed in English. Thus, while I employed the services of a professional translator to translate the documentary data into English, I was able to work with my network to take a critical approach to the translated documents, thus safeguarding against the issues specified above. Nevertheless, caution must always be taken in all interpretations and analyses of Saudi documentation, as even the best translations may contain judgement errors. The question of translation is returned to below regarding interviews/questionnaires.

While documentary analysis formed the basis of this study, additional data collection methods were used to gain understanding and insight into the behaviour of children, teachers and staff about children with disabilities. This was supported by data on the views and opinions of teachers, parents and government officials on the wider topic

issues. The methods best suited to the collection of these data were questionnaire, interview and observation, the selection criteria for which is discussed below.

3.11. Questionnaire

Questionnaires can provide quantitative data for a population, as well as being easy to administer and analyse. The software used to analyse the data from the questionnaires is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software. In the construction of questionnaires, care must be taken in setting the questions to ensure that they are understandable for a wide group of people and that they do not show or encourage bias. It should also be borne in mind that it is not always clear who chooses to respond to a questionnaire and why they have done so. Another factor to be considered is the degree of truthfulness of responses. A clear risk with administering questionnaires is their non-return, and so in an attempt to overcome or limit this issue, a larger number of questionnaires should be administered to a larger sample size. However this problem cannot be fully overcome (Takona, 2002). Finally, the reliance on questionnaires limits the level of detail that may be obtained compared to other forms of data collection, as in most survey approaches there is no, or limited, opportunity for the participant to elaborate on their responses (Takona, 2002). In an attempt to mitigate or overcome the weaknesses associated with questionnaire, I employed two additional research methods: interview and observation.

One advantage of administering questionnaires is the promotion of anonymity, which yields more openness and honesty in responses. Another advantage is that it is time-effective, as questionnaires can be administered to large groups of participants within a short time span (Lodico et al., 2010). Finally, utilising questionnaires ensures minimal cost (Sharma et al., 2006). In this study, questionnaires were sent to different adult practitioners concerned with the education of pre-school children with disabilities. The sample was prepared by using the list prepared by Saudi government officials. Table 9 illustrates the questionnaire sample and demographic profile.

Table 9: Main questionnaire sample demographic profile

Demographics		Frequency
Participants number (teachers)	-	0 70
Educational level	Undergraduate degree	66
	Diploma	3
	Master	1
Pre-School types	Private pre-school	2
	State pre-school	2
Experience length	Between 1-25 years	
	Total	70

The respondents were asked to reply within one month and their responses were analysed by means of a spread sheet, alongside the recording of individual responses. This combined approach assisted in properly determining the views, feelings and opinions of both teachers and parents (Punch, 2009). An issue associated with the distribution of questionnaires is whether all respondents will complete the questionnaire within the given timeframe. In an attempt to address this potential issue, I ensured that questionnaires were administered and returned either personally on site or by email.

3.11.1. Questionnaire design and approach

The questionnaire design stemmed from the research questions, and therefore set out to answer them directly. The term “questionnaire” denotes ‘a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents’ (Kumar, 2005:126). The length of the questionnaire should enable it to be completed in a relatively short period of time. The next consideration is that the questions should begin with simple ones, progressing logically, based upon the objectives of the study. Kumar (2005) claims that the questionnaire approach is one of the most effective in sustaining the interest of participants and can even gradually stimulate them to answer the questions. These suggestions were implemented in my questionnaire by ensuring that questions followed a logical order to maintain participant interest. Mitchell and Jolley (2009) advise that similar questions be kept together. Accordingly, in the questionnaire used in this study grouped questions according to common themes: for example, questions about the backgrounds of participants were grouped together, as were those relating to the SEN policy of their schools. In the end, the questionnaire comprised four sections in which related questions were grouped. It is important that instructions be clear and complete to assist understanding (Gorard, 2001; Thomas and Nelson, 2001). Therefore, I provided all questionnaire participants with a leaflet, consent form, and a clear list of instructions at the beginning (see Appendixes 3 and 4) for the questionnaire).

There are several types of question and response modes, such as dichotomous questions, multiple choice questions, rating scales, constant sum questions, ratio data and open-ended questions (Wilson and Sapsford, 2006). Oppenheim (1992) explains that closed questions are a good way to generate numerical data; closed questions are quick to complete and straightforward to code, and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of the ability of respondents to articulate their thoughts (Wilson and McLean, 1994). However, Oppenheim (1992) warns that closed questions do not allow respondents to further qualify or explain their answers. It has been argued that open-ended questions are valuable as long as the range of possible responses is not known from the exploratory research (Bailey, 1994). In order to overcome this limitation, open questions were therefore posed in the interviews, in an effort to complement the

largely closed-question approach taken in the questionnaire. An important disadvantage of open questions is that they can lead to irrelevant and redundant information if participants do not give the questionnaire their full attention and so questions should be phrased clearly. After considering the literature, the decision was made to use a majority of closed questions, with one open-ended question at the end that allowed participants to expand upon any of their answers. I felt that this design would provide respondents with sufficient opportunity to clarify their responses to the closed questions should they wish.

Avramidis et al. (2000) conducted a study investigating the views and experiences of teachers in the UK regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schooling. This investigation focused on an examination of opinions after the release of the Green Paper, 'Excellence for All Children', published in October 1997 (DfEE, 1997). Their questionnaire revealed that teachers who implemented inclusive programmes possessed a more positive approach to inclusion (Avramidis et al., 2000). Hence for this study, questionnaires were used to identify the views of a large group of teachers towards inclusion of SEN in pre-schools in KSA.

The questionnaire adopted in the current research study comprised four main sections: general background about the respondent; assisting and facilities in and around the school; the respondent's awareness of children's rights, including those in the UN Convention and Saudi inclusion policy; and a final open section, where respondents were free to add comments or feedback as desired. Section 1 contained 15 questions consisting of tick boxes and short answer questions; section 2 contained 14 Likert scale-type questions. Section 3 contained 23 statements answered using a Likert scale; and section 4 contained one open question requesting a longer response (see Appendix 6). The rationale for these questions was based upon the literature review associated with this study and questions were linked to the themes selected from the documentary analysis, so that comparisons could be made.

Section 1 (questions 1-15) evaluated the experiences of teachers with children. The questions addressed issues such as how long they had been teaching, their experiences with children with disabilities, and their specialist training in dealing with disabilities. This was based on the understanding that it is essential to obtain certain details about

a teacher's background, in order to ascertain their experience and training (Bruce, 2010). These variables were analysed and are presented in the findings section.

A similar study that resembled the current research looked at the rights of SEN children with disabilities in Serbia (Kalyva et al., 2007). They successfully employed the use of a Likert scale questionnaire to determine the views of teachers. Given the success of this approach in the study by Kalyva et al., and based upon important similarities between that study and this, the approach was deemed worthy of consideration for use in the Saudi context. Likert questions are easier and quicker to construct than alternatives, such as Thurstone-type scales, despite the latter having been shown to have a close correlation with such scales (Kothari, 2004). Likert scales are also frequently used and therefore likely to be familiar to many participants. The second section of the questionnaire given to participants (questions 16-32) investigated the provision of assistance and facilities for children with disabilities in and around the building. Further questions in this section addressed the level of integration of children with SEN into the school. The main format of questions included Likert scales. Section 3 (question 33) consisted of 23 rateable statements relating to the rights of the child under the UN Convention, Saudi Islamic Law and other policies. Finally, a platform for feedback was provided in section 4, giving teachers the ability to provide any other comments that might be relevant to the investigation and to raise issues not covered by the previous questions (Avramidis et al., 2000).

The questionnaire was discussed with my supervisors and then piloted with a small group of teachers. Following the pilot, a few questions were amended. I then distributed the questionnaires to 100 teachers, both by hand and by email. All of those returned (70) were completed adequately, despite not all having been returned prior to the set deadline. The questionnaires were distributed in a pack that contained the survey itself, along with a consent form and information leaflet that provided detailed information about the purpose of the study, as well as assuring participant confidentiality and securing explicit participant consent (see Appendixes 3 and 4). Anonymity was maintained at all times, in compliance with ethical codes, as well as encouraging honesty and openness when answering.

3.11.2. Questionnaire data analysis

The completed questionnaires were analysed using SPSS and coding, as has been done for several studies relating to the rights of children with disabilities in mainstream schools (e.g., Evans et al., 1997; Kiel, 2003; Doulkeridou et al., 2011; Pachigar et al., 2011). SPSS requires the preparation of a 'codebook', involving a set of instructions regarding the transfer of data into a format that can be understood by the programme (Pallant, 2010). The codebook requires labelling and identifying the variables and the allocation of numbers to all possible responses (Pallant, 2010). For example, codes such as SEN experience and training can be selected; examples of the variables associated with this are the number of years working with children with disabilities and the number of workshops attended. All responses from the questionnaire were coded and entered into the codebook, after which they were entered into SPSS, where the data were then analysed by applying the descriptive statistics. The findings were compiled together with the documentary analysis and interpreted, in order to provide answers to the research questions.

3.12. Interview

According to Yin (2009) one of the most significant sources of case study information is the interview. There are two main forms of interview, one-to-one and group interviews. One-to-one interviews require a meeting between the researcher and a sole participant; a group interview involves the researcher meeting with a group of participants at the same time (Denscombe, 2002). The advantage of a one-to-one interview is that the focus of the interview is controlled by the researcher, as well as that the views provided are given by one source and are not influenced by other participants (May, 2011). One-to-one interviews are also easier to transcribe, because they involve only one participant, thus ensuring that all of the opinions and views are expressed by the participant. For these reasons, I conducted one-to-one interviews for this study, as this was particularly appropriate for obtaining the real views of parents, teachers, and other staff members. However, one of the drawbacks of this approach is that interviews can sometimes restrict participants from expressing views beyond those explicitly covered in the questions (May, 2011). This may be overcome by

ensuring that, during the interview, the interviewer works flexibly and aims to discover the meaning behind participants' opinions through various questioning styles. I made every effort to do this during the interviews, encouraging the participants to speak freely and to express themselves as they wished.

Interviews are widely considered to be the most effective data-collection tool for the largest number of contexts when they are guided conversations. Care has to be taken not to bias the questions and, for this reason, interviews should be 'constructed to elicit knowledge free of bias or prejudice on the part of the interviewer' (May, 2011:140). Generally, most studies are related to human affairs; therefore interviews are an essential source of data for a case study (Yin, 2009). Interviews can also provide useful information that might nevertheless be unpublishable; thus facts can be obtained as well as opinions about these facts. Instead of only answering questions, a good interview will provide information and insights, enabling the exploration of deeper meanings (Denscombe, 2002). The interviewer should be prepared to take notes during the course of the interview, and if possible, the interviews should be recorded (such as by an mp3 or tape recorder), allowing the researcher to revisit the information whenever required (Anderson, 2004).

Yin (2009) lists the advantages of interviews as being targeted and insightful; they also offer a high degree of flexibility (Cohen et al., 2007). The benefit of interviews is the provision of a forum in which interviewees are able to express their views and opinions, and crucially where they are able to expand upon their answers. The interview findings in my study provided opinions concerning the current situation, and data which led to further exploration of possibilities, discussions and understanding of the complex issues pertaining to the provision of education for SEN children in Saudi Arabia (Sekaran, 1992).

The weaknesses of the interview technique are that there can be bias both in asking the questions and in the responses, interviewee inaccuracies, and reflexivity, which describes a situation where the interviewee responds artificially. I sought to overcome this by fostering a good rapport with the interviewees, providing them with adequate prompting and unbiased probing, and avoiding changing the wording of the questions (Cohen et al., 2007).

Some authors (e.g., Sharma et al., 2006) criticise the exclusive use of interviews to obtain the views of participants. The researcher must endeavour to ensure that interviews are supplemented with other methods of data collection (Cohen et al., 2007). I therefore corroborated the interview data with data gathered through observations and questionnaires. This form of triangulation is arguably the most important method of facilitating the validation of data. This ensured that threats to validity were minimised and, furthermore, provided a method of confirmation that the data were validated. (Jonker and Pennink, 2010).

The first issue that can arise with interview data pertains to the relationship between the accounts given by interviewees and the environment that they describe; and the second concerns specific interview technique and how it affects the relationship between the interviewer and the participant (Baker, 1982, cited in Silverman, 2011). There are three approaches to dealing with these two issues; positivism, emotionalism and constructionism (shown in Table 10) (Silverman, 2011).

Table 10: Three approaches to interviews (adapted from Silverman, 2011)

Positivism	Facts about behaviour and attitudes	Random sample, standardised questions
Emotionalism	Authentic experiences	Interviewees expressing their views and experiences
Constructionism	Mutually constructed	Interviewees are treated as topics

A positivist approach aims to provide access to data, such as facts, about the everyday environment and individuals. This type of data is collated through random samples administered through multiple-choice questions. In contrast, an emotionalism approach views interviewees as subjects who have been through experiences, thus providing an insight into their world. Finally, the constructionist approach describes the viewing of interviewers and interviewees as being mutually engaged in the development of meaning, rather than in generating data about facts or experiences. This type of data is collected through the discussion of topics.

3.12.1. Interview design and approach

In this study, I adopted an emotionalism approach where views were sought from several parties an attempt to answer the research questions. I included interviews in order to gather information on the views of Saudi government officials, head teachers, and teachers, and the views of parents involved in pre-school education of SEN children. These groups were interviewed in order to obtain a broad, well-rounded, and unbiased view of the subject matter (see Table 11).

Table 11: Topic agenda for interview discussions

Topic		Questions
Introduction		Welcoming the participants– <i>personal and participants’ introduction.</i> Clarifying the purpose of discussion Participants sign consent form Warming up questions – <i>general question about the pre-schools and educational systems.</i>
Discussion	Phase 1	Identify the level of support, targets and pre-school policy.
	Phase 2	Identify the level of the facilities and resources.
	Phase 3	Identify the amount of funding from the pre-school owners and government.
	Phase 4	Identify the SEN pre-school strategies and the relationships between the participants.
Ending		Thanks to the participants

The interviewees were contacted directly or via snowballing. For example, after interviewing a head teacher, she contacted parents in her school. The parents were chosen as a self-selected sample: they were either the only parents in the pre-school whose children had disabilities or they were first parents who expressing their willingness to be interviewed. I approached the parents in person, by phone, or via letters sent home with children. In the last scenario, each letter was accompanied by an information sheet and consent form, together with approval from the pre-school. The interviews took place in the pre-school and generally lasted about 30 minutes (see Table 12 and Appendix 9 for more information). The UK ethical considerations were adhered to during the course of all the interviews.

Table 12: Demographics profile of the interview sample

Interview			Pre-School type	Educational level of academic staff		No. of participants
Pre-School 1	Head teacher Staff Parents	1 10 3	Private	Master Diploma Bachelor	1 2 5	14
Pre-School 2	Head teacher Staff Parents	1 3 2	State	Master Diploma Bachelor	0 0 4	6
Pre-School 3	Head teacher Staff Parents	1 7 0	Private	Master Diploma Bachelor	0 2 4	8
Pre-School 4	Head teacher Staff Parents	1 5 2	State	Master Diploma Bachelor	1 2 2	8

As with documentary data, it was also important to consider the translation of interview data from Arabic to English. It was also necessary to be mindful of the important differences that exist in conversational speech across the KSA. Although I am a Saudi and fluent in Arabic, in many cases I may be unaware of the subtle nuances of conversational speech in certain areas or regions. In an attempt to address this issue, interviewees were given the opportunity to see the transcript of their interviews.

The findings from the interviews were analysed, searching for common themes. A number of qualitative methods were used, including keyword analysis and coding.

3.12.2. Interview data analysis

Interviews were analysed using a similar coding process to that used for the other research techniques (documentary data). This entailed the identification of text that was relevant to the research being undertaken. Recurring ideas were then highlighted, assisting themes to emerge from the data. Finally, the themes were placed within theoretical constructs, allowing patterns to be seen (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). The final stage involved thematic narratives, where the findings were explained in depth in light of the research questions (*ibid.*). An example of themes and patterns can be found in (Appendixes 9 and 10).

3.13. Observation

Observation is a data collection strategy that entails the study and accumulation of spoken and unspoken behaviours across a range of situations (Bottorff, 2004). The third research strategy used in the triangulation methodology for this study involved direct non-participant observation. The advantage of this method is that the researcher can witness the reality of a situation first-hand, and the observations are also better able to cover the entire context of the study. Moreover, by conducting a field visit to the case study pre-schools, I was able to create the opportunity for direct observations. The disadvantages of direct observation are that it is time-consuming and costly, can be selective and not generalisable, and that ultimately the results may not even reflect reality due to the presence of an observer (Yin, 2009).

Observation works best if the observer knows clearly what is being looked for (Cohen et al., 2007). In addition to human activities, physical structures can also be monitored. It can often be useful to have more than one observer, as this increases the reliability of what is being observed; however due to the scope of this study multiple observers were not feasible, and so a single observer strategy was utilised. Non-participant observations are often used to examine the needs of various subjects ranging from children to adults. Photographic/recording evidence can also help to improve observational findings, although I was unable to gather such evidence in this study due to cultural and legal restrictions. In the majority of cases, it is better for an observer not to take part in the activities and to simply watch in the background; therefore this is the approach that I took in this study.

An advantage of using non-participant observations for data collection is that the researcher is able to directly witness and record the occurrence of unfiltered behaviour. This quality makes observation particularly appropriate for the study of classrooms and playgrounds (Ary et al., 2010). The observer does not need to ask participants any questions, or about their views, instead simply recording their actions (Ary et al., 2010). That said; a weakness of using observation as a form of data collection is the impact the presence of the researcher has on participants, which can result in the alteration of their behaviours and reactions. Another disadvantage is that observations are very time consuming and therefore can be impractical within some

research contexts (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, the first disadvantage was minimised by ensuring that the method of observation was completely unobtrusive: observations were made from a position at the back of classrooms and on the edges of the playgrounds. Additionally, I did not participate in any activities or speak to the teachers or children. The second disadvantage of practicality was overcome by planning and effective time management in an attempt to attain maximum benefit from the limited number of observation periods available at each school.

3.13.1. Observation approach

In my study, observations of children with disabilities were conducted in all four pre-schools, both in the classroom and in the playground. An emphasis was placed on observing the children with disabilities, focusing on the ways in which they interacted with each other, with the other children, and with the adults in their environments. A total of six were observed, each for at least one day (see Table 13). The aim was to gain an unfiltered view of interactions between staff members and SEN children, in addition to a better insight into the interrelationships between teachers and SEN children, and between the SEN children and their peers. It was hoped that these insights would enable a fairer and more informed comparison policies with the actions of those involved in the sample (Ware and Brewer, 1999). I observed SEN children in inclusive pre-school settings in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, assessment was also made of the facilities and actions of the adults who worked in these settings. This method was particularly useful to determine the realities associated with inclusion of the children with disabilities in pre-schools.

Table 13: Demographics profile of the observation sample

Schools	Children observed	Disability type		Observation duration (by weeks)	Observation schedule
Pre-School 1	2	Physical disability	1	1	Outdoor information (morning time) In-class observation Lunch time observation Playtime observation Home time
		Down Syndrome	1	1	
Pre-School 2	1	Down Syndrome	1	1	
Pre-School 3	1	Blind	1	1	
	1	Deaf	1	1	
Pre-School 4	1	Physical disability	1	1	

3.13.2. Observation data analysis

Data collected from non-participant observations were recorded in handwritten note form, according to a pre-designed observation schedule (see Appendixes 11 and 12). This resulted in the creation of a textual record that could be analysed by means of coding. Therefore, as with the other research methods used in this study, a codebook was created and the observations categorised into the codes. These were then analysed from a thematic perspective, after which they were explained alongside documentary and interview data using thematic narratives (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003).

3.14. Development of coding frame – raw data, preliminary and final coding

Generating a codebook was the main part of the coding process. I analysed the data by reading and re-reading all of the texts to thoroughly familiarise myself with their content. Once this phase was completed, I assigned preliminary codes and then sorted them into a final code that was entered in the codebook (see Table 14). The codebook shows the themes detailed with descriptors, codes and sub codes, which were linked back to the research questions.

Table 14: Codebook used for coding data in this thesis

Theme Code	Theme	Code
1	Staff Academic Background Descriptions of the academic qualifications that staff members possess including Special Educational Needs, Teaching Certification, etc.	1.1 Degree holders 1.2 Degree holders with SEN qualification 1.3 Degree holders with teaching experience and SEN qualification
2	Staff SEN Experience Descriptions of the type and level of experience with children with disabilities, resources and	2.1 Lack of SEN experience 2.2 A wealth of SEN experience

	training.	2.3 Training
3	<p>Staff/Child Relationship</p> <p>Descriptions of the relationship between staff members and children, including children with disabilities. This theme covers self-motivation, conflicting relationships and positive relationships.</p>	<p>3.1 Self-motivation</p> <p>3.2 Conflict</p> <p>3.3 Positive relationships</p>
4	<p>Staff Relationship</p> <p>Descriptions of the working relationship amongst staff members including head teacher, teachers, SEN teachers, etc.</p>	<p>4.1 Self-motivation</p> <p>4.2 Good general attitudes among staff</p> <p>4.3 Positive relationships</p>
5	<p>Pre-school SEN strategy</p> <p>Descriptions of the pre-school's SEN strategy implementation where the policy may be present or absent; this includes the recognition of SEN requirements, setting targets for children with disabilities and the provision of support for children with disabilities.</p>	<p>5.1 Pre-school's SEN policy implemented</p> <p>5.2 Pre-school's SEN strategy absent</p> <p>5.2 Recognition of SEN requirements</p> <p>5.3 Target regularly set for SEN</p> <p>5.4 Provision of Support for Children with disabilities</p>
6	<p>Policy Implementation</p> <p>Descriptions of the policy being implemented including State policy, UN article and SEN implementation.</p>	<p>6.1. State policy implementation</p> <p>6.2. UN article implementation</p>
7	<p>Learning Environment</p> <p>Descriptions of the learning environment including access, facilities, resources, SEN support, provision of qualified staff and support staff.</p>	<p>7.1 Ease of access for children with disabilities</p> <p>7.2 Well supported facilities for children with disabilities</p> <p>7.3 Provision of resources for children with disabilities</p> <p>7.4 Support staff available</p> <p>7.5 Qualified staff</p> <p>7.6 Insufficient support staff</p>

8	<p>Staff Responsibilities</p> <p>Descriptions of the responsibilities of teaching staff, including carrying out teacher observations/training, being responsible for children with disabilities and the provision of SEN support.</p>	<p>8.1. Responsible for children with disabilities</p> <p>8.2. Absence of SEN support</p> <p>8.3. Adequate SEN support</p> <p>8.4. Observing teachers</p>
9	<p>Staff Knowledge</p> <p>Descriptions of staff knowledge on SEN rights state policy and the UN article.</p>	<p>9.1 Awareness of SEN rights</p> <p>9.2 State policy awareness</p> <p>9.3 UN article awareness</p>
10	<p>Teachers' Attitude</p> <p>Descriptions of teachers' attitudes to inclusion, SEN, approach to teaching, approach to their work and understanding of children's rights.</p>	<p>10.1 Opposes inclusion</p> <p>10.2 Supports inclusion</p> <p>10.3 Attention to SEN</p> <p>10.4 Approach to teaching</p> <p>10.5 Approach to their work</p>
11	<p>Parents' Knowledge</p> <p>Descriptions of parents' knowledge on SEN rights, state policy and the UN article.</p>	<p>11.1 Awareness of SEN rights</p> <p>11.2 State policy awareness</p> <p>11.3 UN article awareness</p>
12	<p>Parental Attitude/Views</p> <p>Description of parents' attitudes to inclusion, SEN policy implementation, socialisation of children with disabilities, academic experience of SEN, obstacles to inclusion and their concerns.</p>	<p>12.1 Supports inclusion</p> <p>12.2 SEN policy implementation</p> <p>12.3 Positive academic SEN experience</p> <p>12.4 Obstacles to inclusion</p> <p>12.5 Concerns about inclusion</p>

3.15. Translation

All of the questionnaire, interview and observation data in this study were collected in Arabic. Therefore, it needed to be translated into English for coding and analysis. The difficulty of translating questionnaires into a foreign languages is well recognised (Sperber, 2004), particularly when the results are used in cross-cultural/cross-national research. In the study of healthcare practitioners, Sperber (2004) warns that published results can pose a threat to validity when concerns about translation have not been addressed. As a result, only the most relevant translation process should be chosen for each particular study, which should be rigorously validated in the research (ibid.). In my study, given the specific context in which it was investigated, I only used one language for the questionnaires (Arabic). However, I exercised special caution during the translation of the findings into English, as well as in the comparison of the findings with published literature written in English. A good example of an English language questionnaire concerning SEN education sent to British parents is provided by Parsons et al. (2010). Their questionnaire contains similar questions to the ones used in my Arabic one, and even yielded similar responses. I therefore used their study as a point of reference during the construction of the questionnaire in this study. Despite this care, translation can sometimes lead to misleading interpretations however. I therefore employed the back translation method to translate the questionnaires (Charafeddine et al., 2013). This involved translating the Arabic questionnaire back into the English language in order to ascertain whether the Arabic answers were well-matched to the English translation. My study employed the services of a professional Arabic linguist for this process. In addition to the questionnaire itself, the translator reviewed and translated the information sheet and consent forms. For the interview data, I translated the data from Arabic into English during transcription. Samples of the audio recordings and my written English translations were sent to a professional translator for verification. For observation data, I translated the Arabic notes into English, after which a sample was again sent to the translator for verification.

3.16. Validity of Data Analysis

Cohen et al. (2007) recommend several strategies for minimising any threat to validity during data analysis. These include the standardisation of results, the use of appropriate statistical analysis methods, and minimisation of the halo effect, meaning that the researcher should not influence the analysis through their existing knowledge of the data, persons or situations (ibid.). This research also attempted to avoid unfair aggregation and telescoping of data, as well as selective use of the data. For qualitative data, peer validation was employed as a validity test. A data sample and a summary of the codes created were given to another doctoral researcher, to ascertain whether the coding had been conducted appropriately.

3.17. Comparing the findings from all methods used

The aim of this research is to determine how closely the practice of inclusion documented in Saudi government literature is being followed. This meant that the findings from the practical studies needed to be compared against the findings from the documentary analysis. Initially, the questionnaires, interviews and observations were combined using triangulation methodology. This involved the similarities and differences between the data sources being determined. Using similar coding themes was extremely useful in this regard. To the end, conclusions were drawn concerning inclusive practices in Saudi pre-schools, as detailed in Chapter 4. The final analysis involved a comparison between these practical findings and the documentary analysis, which enabled the research questions to be answered.

3.18. Conclusion

This chapter has presented and explained the methodological approach selected in this study. Based upon a comprehensive review of the literature, I chose to utilise a mixed methods approach, using a fusion of documentary analysis, interviews, observations, and questionnaires. This approach enabled the triangulation of the results to increase validity and accuracy (Punch, 2009). This process was conducted in order to investigate the possibility of gaps between government policy and the way that it is

implemented in the classroom. In this case, evidence was gathered concerning Saudi government policy in relation to inclusion of children with disabilities in pre-schools. This study combined the analysis of documentary resources with the analysis of primary sources (interviews, observation, and questionnaires) in order to determine the reality of the situation. This was compared against the views of those affected by SEN policies. The research was conducted in accordance with the BERA guidelines for ethical research practice, as well as the ethical requirements of the University of Roehampton. Explicit written permission to conduct this research was obtained from the Saudi Ministry of Education, from the four pre- schools, and from the individual participants themselves, in compliance with standard UK and University of Roehampton ethical guidelines.

Chapter 4. Findings

4.1. Introduction

This section presents the findings of my research. I discuss each theme followed by the documentary analysis, and then discuss each pre-school. To begin, I provide details of the documents used, followed by a brief introduction to each of the participating pre-schools. For each of the themes, I discuss the associated literature and the data that were obtained in the first place from the documentary analysis. This gave me an indication about what social scientists have considered with respect to each theme and what governments and other organisations state that they are practicing. What then follows are my research data connected with each theme from the questionnaires, interviews and observations. Each theme is then analysed in relation to the research questions. The final section combines all of the themes in order to determine the degree to which the study has been successful in addressing the research questions.

The documents utilised were described in detail in the method section. The majority of these documents were obtained through Saudi reports prepared for the United Nations, Saudi government websites, and from the Saudi Ministry of Education (MOE).

4.2. Themes

Themes were derived from the literature review along with my own data as presented in section 3.14. These themes are: Staff academic background; staff SEN experience; staff/child relationships; the relationships between staff; SEN strategy; SEN policy implementation; learning environment; staff responsibilities; staff knowledge; staff attitudes; and parental attitudes and parental knowledge. Table 15 outlines the themes which are derived by each tool including documentary analysis, interviews and observations.

Table 15: Themes generated by each qualitative method

Theme	Title	Derived from
• 1	Academic background	Documentary –Interviews
• 2	Staff SEN experience	Documentary –Interviews
• 3	Staff/child relationship	Interviews-Observation
• 4	Staff relationships	Interviews-Observation
• 5	SEN strategy	Interview-Observation
• 6	SEN Policy implementation	Documentary -Interviews-Observation
• 7	Learning environment	Documentary -Interviews-Observation
• 8	Staff responsibilities	Documentary –Interviews- Observation
• 9	Staff knowledge	Documentary –Interviews
• 10	Staff attitude	Documentary –Interviews
• 11	Parents' knowledge	Interviews
• 12	Parents' attitude	Interviews

4.3. Theme 1: Academic Background

The education of pre-school practitioners has been discussed by many authors (e.g., Dalli and Urban, 2010; Urban et al., 2011; 2012). Although professionalism and academic backgrounds are distinct from one another, attempts to improve the professionalism of pre-school practitioners have often been associated with the need for increased education for these individuals (e.g., Urban et al., 2011). I have used the official Saudi government documents (Saudi Education Policy, Saudi SEN Policy

(e.g., MOE, 2015) which list the levels and kinds of education expected for pre-school practitioners, to gain a better understanding of what the KSA expects in order to implement the rights and policies towards children with disabilities.

This theme was investigated through my use of documentary analysis of the official Saudi documents, interviews and questionnaires administered to all staff members from all four case studies.

4.3.1. Findings from documentary analysis

With respect to documentary analysis, I closely examined a report that was written by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2007),¹ in close collaboration with the Saudi MOE. This document clearly demonstrates the ways in which the Saudi Government works to improve the national educational system with the cooperation of international organisations. The report outlines the principal aims of the Saudi Arabian government concerning education: (a) to have children who understand Islam and its values; and (b) to equip children with skills and knowledge to become useful members of their communities.

The proposal outlined a strategic plan to ensure a meaningful, effective and practical system of education meant to discover and unlock the potential in all children and to thereby generate a spirit of action. At the time of writing, the strategic plan is undergoing implementation in the KSA (MOE, 2016a) The Saudi government acknowledges the importance of teachers, placing great emphasis on their ‘orientation and training’. It is felt that the educators should be included in education councils in each area, the councils being charged with the preparation of developmental programmes (UNESCO, 2007). It also includes actions meant to improve education for young (pre-school) children, ensuring that at least 40% of boys and girls are enrolled in compulsory basic education, expanding opportunities for SEN children, improving teacher education and teaching methodologies, developing new syllabi, and assessing schools (UNESCO, 2007).

¹

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/ARAB_STATES/Saudi_Arabia/Saudi_Arabia.htm

The MOE is in charge of general education, teacher training, and special education in Saudi Arabia. The General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE) was established in 1960 to define study programmes and curricula for girls' education. The GPGE originally controlled pre-schools, general education, teacher training, and other aspects of education and training for women. However, it is now part of the general Ministry of Education, which has recently become responsible for both girls and boys.

Pre-school education is provided by pre-schools, which cater for children aged 3-6 years old, although attendance is not a prerequisite for enrolment in elementary education. Pre-schools can either be government-run or established by private institutions, although the latter receive both technical and financial aid from the state. Pre-school education is not considered to be part of the formal education system; however, it is apparent that the government has an increasing interest in pre-school education. For example, between 1996/7 and 2004/5, the number of state and private pre-schools doubled (from 602 to 1,320). The number of pre-school teachers also more than doubled (from 4,606 to 9,744) (UNESCO, 2007).

The UNESCO Report (2007) gives statistics for higher education; however, no data are provided with regard to the teacher education colleges, as these are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. For training courses which lead into teaching at pre-school level, the previous secondary institutions for female teachers have now been integrated into the universities (Ministry of Higher Education, 2012). The courses now provided require an intermediate pre-school certificate or equivalent for entry (approximately 17-18 years of age) and, also, potential teachers require high grades for entry (MOHE, 2012). The length of study, previously three years, has now been extended to four years at which point, if successful, students are awarded a degree. In 2002/3, there were a total of 18 Teachers' Colleges in the KSA, with 29,989 students enrolled.

The curriculum for pre-school teacher training includes modules covering subjects that include an introduction into early years' studies, children in Islam, the psychology of children, and childhood local and international organisations (MOHE, 2012). Modules incorporate basic academic subjects but many also involve learning what and how to teach. The prospective pre-school teachers are expected to learn

about the national curriculum for pre-schools and there are modules that focus on special education. In the final year, students are expected to spend three days per week in a pre-school for the whole academic year. During this period, they are observed and assessed by pre-school teachers and visiting university staff. Universities are also responsible for upgrading teachers. University trainees are expected to spend 14 hours per week teaching and 13 hours at university where they are taught modules relating to teaching practice, researching current pedagogy, and writing a thesis.

In relation to the types of degree programmes that teachers have completed, Al Mousa (2010) states that there has been an incredible development in all the SEN programmes in the KSA and furthermore, this has occurred due to the higher education sector incorporating inclusion and thus allowing SEN students to study further and specialise in their fields. Additionally these institutions have developed special training programmes and units of study for their staff members, thus equipping them with the skills required to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It has become well known that the SEN Department at King Saudi University has attained a grade of 'Outstanding' for its teacher training programmes since 1984.

Furthermore, other specialised departments across different universities in the KSA provide training according to the type of the disability. Some of these departments include: a) Division of Psychological Services for Exceptional Children at the Department of Psychology, College of Education, King Saud University; b) Health Rehabilitation Department at the College of Applied Medical Sciences, King Saud University; c) Department of Special Education at Teachers College in Jeddah; d) Department of Special Education at the College of Dar AlHikmah for Girls in Jeddah; e) Department of Special Education at the College of Education, King Faisal University; f) Department of Special Education at the College of Education, University of Taif; and g) Department of Special Education at the College of Arabic Language and Social Studies, University of Al-Qassim Department of Special Education at the College of Education, Taibah University (Al Mousa, 2008). Consequently, it is clear that there is widespread education across the colleges and that there is a distinct awareness of SEN in the KSA. This is a positive step in the

right direction where the focal point is on educating teachers and preparing them for what is to come during their teaching practice.

Overall, the documentary analysis shows that only 25% of pre-school-aged children attend pre-school in Saudi Arabia. However, the government still intends to increase this number to 40%, although currently, the teacher training for this level is still not included in higher education statistics (MOE, 2016b). Nevertheless, a minimum of three years of education are needed for students to graduate from teacher training secondary institutions so that they are qualified to teach at pre-school level. No statistics were available on the number of current pre-school teachers who are qualified/not qualified.

4.4. Theme 2: Staff SEN Experience

The second theme under exploration is staff SEN experience. Although staff may be fully qualified to teach in mainstream education, they may still lack experience in dealing with SEN children. In addition, the range of special education needs is great, with the result that even those educators with qualifications in SEN may lack specific knowledge of how to treat and teach an individual child, depending on their particular special education needs (Al Mousa, 2010). Appropriate experience can also help staff to more effectively identify any possible special educational needs of the children in their care that have not yet been determined. In the KSA, all specialised SEN staff undergo a rigorous, two-year training programme at university in order to learn how to effectively support all types of disabilities in children. Thereafter they can specialise in a specific SEN area such as learning difficulties.

A range of studies can be found in the literature concerning staff SEN experience. For example, Savolainen et al. (2011) compare teachers in Finland and South Africa in order to determine the attitudes of in-service teachers towards special needs, as well as how competent they felt they were in implementing inclusive practice. Teachers in both countries had concerns about how to implement inclusive practices – in Finland the main concern was about behaviour, but this was not so in South Africa. Interestingly, the level of education of the teachers played a relatively minor part in determining attitudes, but those with more experience were generally less positive

about inclusion than less-experienced teachers. Teacher efficacy was found to be most important in determining attitudes and the factors most linked with positive attitudes to inclusion were shown to be efficacy in managing behaviour, the use of inclusive instructions, and collaboration.

In my study, the SEN experience of staff was investigated through documentary analysis, questionnaires and interviews.

4.4.1. Documentary analysis

In 2013, the KSA Ministry of Education introduced a two-term university programme focused on abilities and skills for teachers to deal with all types of students at all stages of their education (MOE, 2014). This programme provides that prospective teachers are able to visit pre-schools daily, giving them an opportunity to deal with students with disabilities. While not compulsory, the programme gives an opportunity to prospective teachers so that they can gain direct experience with special educational needs teaching.

The KSA had set up legislative policies for the implementation of SEN education for teachers for over ten years such as Law Number 224 (2001); however it is essential to determine whether teacher training programmes are fulfilling the needs of trainee teachers through knowledge, teaching responsibilities and experience of SEN. Al-Quraini (2012) states that the inclusion policies are not being implemented in schools; thus the needs of children with disabilities are not being met. This links directly back to training teachers and equipping them with the right skills to practice inclusion and carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. One question that needs to be addressed is whether trainee teachers are made aware of the legislation regarding inclusion in the KSA and, furthermore, are they aware that it is a legislative requirement to be aware of the inclusion policy and to apply it? Finally, if pre-school teachers are aware of the policies, the next step is to determine how willing they are to implement them (Al-Quraini, 2012).

One study carried out in the KSA investigated the relationship between the cognitive and affective attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of hard-of-hearing (HH)

children (Al Shahrani, 2014). The study reported that teachers with more years of teaching experience (11-15 years) had a less inclusive approach to HH children, compared to those with fewer years of teaching experience. This could perhaps be due to more recent teacher training programmes teaching inclusion compared to previously. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of ongoing professional development and knowledge.

4.5. Theme 3: The relationship between staff and children

The relationship between staff and children is of utmost importance for SEN children. My data suggested that under some circumstances these children are included with their peers for long periods, sometimes with the support of a teaching assistant and at other times not. In other cases, children with disabilities spent little time with their peers, but were removed for specialised learning instead. It is apparent from my data that it is the adults' responsible for the care and education of individual children with special educational needs who are most crucial for the progress and contentment of each child in a pre-school setting. This is discussed further in the following section. Clearly, the relationships with individual children and their individual teachers can be major factors in determining teaching quality (Driscoll et al., 2011).

Lyon et al. (2009) examine staff/child relationships by analysing the effectiveness of teacher-child interaction training with regards to the support given to social and emotional development of young children in urban, low-income, ethnic minority pre-school children in the US. The study aimed to increase the skills of pre-school teachers in terms of positive attention for children and ensuring consistent discipline. It was hoped that this type of training might encourage children's functioning and prevent mental health problems. Although only a small group of teachers was involved in the study, the effects were positive. Whether such training would work in the KSA is a subject for further research.

A thorough literature search revealed no Saudi studies specifically covering this theme. However, good staff-child relationships in pre-schools can improve children's learning experiences. The findings from my interviews, questionnaires and

observations in Saudi pre-schools are therefore useful for elucidating the different aspects of the staff-child interactions.

4.6. Theme 4: Staff relationships

With regard to children with disabilities, parental involvement in their schooling may be particularly important to the development of each child. As such, this theme also examines staff relationships with parents. Teaching has traditionally been isolated consisting of one teacher in a classroom with a group of children. However, even under these circumstances, teachers meet with one another and other staff at meetings, during lunch and even outside pre-school hours. Therefore, all of the teachers in the surveyed pre-schools had some level of interaction and collaboration with other staff in their pre-school, as well as with professionals from outside their pre-school and with parents. These collaborations are particularly important in the struggle to meet the needs of individual SEN children in inclusive pre-school settings. Teamwork is important in diagnosis, implementation of individual learning plans, and assessment of findings.

Young (1994) investigated how special education and pre-schools teachers developed a programme involving inclusion of five-year-old children into mainstream education. The success of the programme was thought to be due to the joint planning, collaboration, and flexibility of the adults involved. Jordan et al. (1997) studied the ways in which teachers work with children with disabilities, those at risk, and other children. These authors state that a major predictor of quality was the level of collaboration in the pre-school (in addition to staff attitudes about integration of children with special educational needs). Collaborative support from resource teachers and teaching assistants was deemed to be essential (*ibid.*). By becoming collaborative and working well together, the adults surrounding special needs children can set a model of behaviour, enabling these children to become collaborative adults in their future lives.

The way in which pre-school staff interact with each other, has consequences for all children. This may be particularly true for children who need additional help with their education. In order to effectively investigate staff relationships, I used

interviews, questionnaires and observations; however documentary evidence was not appropriate in this context.

4.7. Theme 5: SEN strategy

In 2004, the Department for Education and Skills published a research paper by Davis et al. (2004); it provided evidence regarding the most successful strategies in particular contexts. For pre-schools, they stated that success requires a strategy which supports high quality early interactions between parents and their children with SEN, followed by intensive interactions when the child started pre-school. Innovative strategies such as specific uses of ICT and/or counselling were also mentioned.

A 2006 Ofsted paper (Ofsted, 2006) found that there was relatively little collaborative work across local authority services in the service of the needs of children with SEN. The work at that time was still largely at strategic level, however, meaning that it was yet to be fully implemented, and had yet to become a reality in pre-schools (ibid.).

I aimed to investigate the development, perception and implementation of SEN strategy in the KSA.

4.7.1. Documentary Data

UNESCO (2007) highlights the importance of participating in and influencing ‘the drafting of policies and strategic plans relating to education (the development and drafting of national plans designed to achieve the goals of Education for All)’. Meanwhile, documentary data from the Saudi government have shown a high level of commitment to education for all SEN children, as well as to their inclusion in most cases. The most recent publication states that deaf children should be included in mainstream education and that they should not attend specialist centres (MOF, 2014). It also states that mainstream teachers should be trained to work with these children either in workshops or by attending training sessions during the pre-school year.

Although the KSA government may be trying to increase the rates of inclusion, the final decision for admission of the child with disabilities comes down to the decisions

made by the head teacher in both private and state pre-schools. Even though a head teacher is expected to write a justification for an admissions refusal, any practical implementation of inclusive education lies with the head teacher of each pre-school (MOE, 2014). In addition to this possible barrier, a recent review by King Saud University of Saudi policy with respect to special educational needs has shown that while there may be policy, there is nevertheless a shortage of strategies (AL Edreas, 2013).

A decision made by the MOE in October 2015 aims to support SEN children by doubling the additional funding for children with disabilities in schools including pre-schools in the KSA. For example, pre-school-aged children with a disability will now receive £100 on a monthly basis rather than the previous stipend of £50. This may help their families to provide better services and encourage the SEN children to attend pre-schools more frequently (MOE, 2015b).

In general state pre-schools are funded according to the needs of the individual pre-schools, whereas private pre-schools receive a mix of private and state funds. In the private pre-schools the KSA government funds 20% of the fees and the remaining 80% is met through the income streams of the pre-school. In addition, since 2012 in private pre-schools, newly qualified teachers have half of their salaries funded by the government, in order to encourage capacity building and improve private provision of education (MOE, 2015a). According to the MOE (2005), all pre-school provision including both private and state pre-schools must be inspected by an inspector who evaluates whether the teaching and the provisions are at an acceptable standard. Inspectors are also required to focus on children with SEN and on the inclusion strategies.

More recently, a new policy has been recognised in the KSA. The Minister of Education has announced that the responsibility for paying SEN fees in private pre-schools will be taken over by the MOE under defined conditions:

- The child has a mental disability with some abilities of learning
- Autistic children
- Children with physical disabilities

- Where the family income per month is not more than £2000; in this case the country will cover the fees (MOE, 2016a).

Thus it can be seen that there is some policy in place with respect to the education of pre-school children with disabilities. The implementation status of the policy is less clear.

4.8. Theme 6: Special educational needs policy implementation

The sixth theme relates to the implementation of Saudi policy. Inclusion is only one aspect of special educational needs policy, but it is a major aspect of special educational needs now being implemented in many situations. Proper assessment of the individual child is another key area dictated by policy, which may or may not be implemented. Of course, the implementation of policy can only follow knowledge about policy, and for this reason these two themes can sometimes be hard to separate. Nevertheless, I have attempted to identify the staff who know and implement policy, those who know policy but fail to implement it, and those who fail to implement policy because they are unaware of it.

Some of the literature concerning policy implementation describes techniques that can be used for either assessment of special needs or teaching practices, including those which support inclusion. A number of studies (Bagnato 2005; Bagnato et al. 2011) have examined evidence-based practice in the assessment of special educational needs in early childhood. Bagnato et al. (2011) argued that successful interventions for young children with disabilities require the use of adequate assessment procedures. They also stated that assessments could help to determine children's real-life skills and competencies, which would facilitate the effective planning of individual programmes and the subsequent assessment of progress. There is a requirement for special needs professionals (e.g., SEN inspectors) to be involved in the measurement of assessment, instruction, and progress. This is particularly important for SEN children in inclusive situations (Keilty et al., 2009). Mainstream teachers require assistance to be sure that appropriate activities are being carried out adequately. Policy guidance is needed so that professional standards and evidence-based practice can be aligned.

Furthermore, there are often wide discrepancies between policy, beliefs and practice. For example, Hwang and Evans (2011) in the Republic of Korea found that 41% of mainstream teachers appeared to think inclusion is a good idea, but 55% said they would not like to have children with disabilities in their classrooms. I intend to determine whether there are similar disagreements in Saudi Arabia.

4.8.1. Documentary Data

The MOE in the KSA understands the significance of developing and applying an educational policy that promotes the education of children with disabilities with a relevant curriculum that meets their needs, and it does so, in order to maintain the religious values of Islam. Furthermore, its activities have been developed further to establish legislative guarantees and protections for individuals with disabilities, thus ensuring equal access to education for all school-aged children in the KSA (MOE, 2016a). The MOE has devised a Disability Code alongside regulations for SEN Programs and Institutions (Al-Quraini, 2010). This is not something new in the KSA since, back in 1990, the MOE placed a special emphasis on an educational policy which had a focal point being the education of SEN children. Thereafter, reforms began with new policy implementation for SEN children.

To meet the international changes that have been taking place in inclusive education in Europe and North America (these two regions are known to be the most influential continents upon the Arabian Peninsula), the SEN system in the KSA has undergone several positive changes and developments. One example of this is a ten-year plan that had been devised for the period 2005-2015 (Al-Odaib and Al-Sedairy, 2014). More recently, the MOE has been making adjustments of the aforementioned policy, such as devising new curricula. The MOE is aware of the significant impact that the SEN system has in the KSA alongside acknowledging children with learning disabilities as children with special needs (ibid). Al-Mousa (2004) states that the policy of Special Education Needs, certainly the quantity and quality of special education programmes and support services, has crossed the boundaries of the impossible; to integrate and start from what other successful countries have

developed/omitted for their children with disabilities into the Saudi system to better develop our education system for children with special needs.

Ultimately, however, the responsibility lies with pre-school teachers who will need to implement the policies, but first they need to be ready to accept children with disabilities into their pre-schools even if it is only children with a specific type of disability. Otherwise inclusion will not be successful.

4.9. Theme 7: Learning Environment

The importance of children's physical learning environment has been well documented. Touhill and Radich (2012) define a good, active learning environment for pre-school children as

one in which children are encouraged to explore and interact with the environment to make meaning and knowledge through their experiences, social interactions and negotiations with others (Touhill and Radich, 2012: 45).

The learning environment for all children, and particularly for those with special educational needs, should be one in which children are presented with learning opportunities in ways that they can understand and follow. The environment should be sensitive to all the children in a classroom, enabling physical needs, teaching strategies, outputs and any requirements for additional support staff to be tailored to the individual child. One of the most important factors in establishing a good learning environment is the presence of teachers who are willing and able to create and use such spaces. This has been seen in other national contexts, such as the notable variations found among American teachers with respect to whether they had the time and/or professional expertise to create good inclusive learning environments (Blecker and Boakes, 2010).

Some experts have stressed the importance of the social climate, rather than physical structures, in the effectiveness of learning environments for children with SEN (Allodi, 2010). While all children can benefit from a positive, motivating classroom environment, more vulnerable students require such a setting in order to really thrive and feel welcome at pre-school. How much a role the physical environment plays in

establishing a good social climate is difficult to ascertain. However, by means of various research strategies in this study (documentary analysis, interviews, questionnaires and observations) I have highlighted the importance of effective learning environments.

4.9.1. Documentary Data

Numerous documents are available to illustrate how the Saudi government has approached the learning environment with respect to children with special educational needs. For example, a document from the group of specialist advisors for multi-disability study suggests that they should consider the individual needs for each child with disability when organising the learning environments (MOE, 2010).

The government of Saudi Arabia has made significant funding (around £20 billion in 2015) available for schools in general, as well as for pre-schools, to enable them to accommodate children with SEN (MOF, 2015). They have also selected a group of consultants (GSAM), who have been tasked to provide advice about (a) how to facilitate the implementation of inclusive rights for SEN children; and (b) how much funding should be made available to build new schools with adequate equipment, in order to provide for SEN children of all ages (MOE, 2015a).

Regarding the importance of having adequate equipment and facilities, a study conducted by Al Mouter (2013) examined the reasons behind students with physical disabilities discontinuing their education at public schools in Riyadh, in the KSA. The sample size comprised of 171 students with physical disabilities, from various single-sex schools in Riyadh, 53% of who were female. A mixed methods approach was used, involving surveys, interviews with parents, and observations at school. It was found that 112 of the students with disabilities did not continue their studies due to the lack of access facilities within the school. More than 86% of the schools were found to lack access ramps and a remarkable 93% of these schools did not provide special toilet access facilities for students with disabilities (ibid.). The study led to an inquiry by the Saudi Ministry of Education regarding the dire lack of access facilities for students with physical disabilities.

A recent study by Al-Zoubi and Abdul Rehman (2016) illustrates that setting up a Learning Disability Resource Room (LDRR) could positively and significantly impact on the learning of children with learning disabilities in the KSA. An LDRR is defined as a resource room that is specifically dedicated to providing activities for children with disabilities, assessment and diagnosis, effective teaching strategies and collaboration between teachers and SEN educators. The study compared two different learning environments – the first was an LDRR and the second was a traditional classroom environment – where the outcome of learning by 60 children (divided equally between both groups) with learning disabilities was analysed. The group of children who experienced learning in an LDRR performed at a significantly higher level when compared to those in the control group. Therefore, the establishment of LDRR at schools appears to be an important addition to the success obtained by children with disabilities.

Thus it can be seen that there have been successful methods being implemented to improve the learning environments for children with disabilities, but yet more needs to be done.

4.10. Theme 8: Staff responsibilities

The eighth theme is staff responsibilities. Mainstream teachers have many duties that place demands on their time and energy, which are often increased in inclusive settings. This load can be diminished with the presence of SEN teachers/coordinators/teaching assistants, but ultimately a teacher is responsible for the education of all of the children in his/her class.

Research for the Policy Exchange in the UK concerning teacher expertise and responsibilities associated with special educational needs found a number of interesting issues that are salient to this discussion (Hartley, 2010). In the first instance, the report looked at special schools, concentrating on how teachers could assume the responsibilities required for inclusive classrooms. SEN children were often dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis, meaning that all teachers need to be equipped to deal with problems quickly and productively. In this way, it was argued that the majority of the problems associated with special educational needs could be managed

by individual classroom teachers themselves, by teachers taking responsibility for their actions. Hartley (2010) claims that governments have not responded to the needs of teachers for more skills either during initial teacher training or through continuing professional development.

This is one factor that has contributed to the proliferation of websites to aid teachers. For example, for the UK, Janssen-Cilag Ltd (2014) reports information about ADHD and other categories of special educational need (<http://www.livingwithadhd.co.uk/teachers-role>). Particularly useful is their definition of the roles and responsibilities of teachers as compared with other school staff with respect to SEN. UK research has been published on the roles and responsibilities of teaching assistants and teachers, including those associated with special educational needs (Blatchford et al, 2011). Hartley (2010) argues that classroom teachers have not been given sufficient incentives to develop more special educational needs skills or knowledge, hindering them from taking better responsibility for the children with SEN in their classes. In order to investigate this theme in my study, I decided to utilise questionnaires, observations and interviews, as Saudi documentary analysis was limited in this respect. One potential source for further information on this topic might have been the employment contracts of staff responsible for all children, and specifically for those with responsibility for the SEN children.

4.10.1. Documentary Data

Prior to 1958, children with disabilities in the KSA did not receive any specific type of help or educational assistance in schools; instead parents shouldered this responsibility to aid the learning of their children (Al-Quraini, 2011). Since the 1950's, the special educational services in the KSA have improved greatly, but more is required in the areas discussed above.

Very few articles have been published in relation to the allocation of senior administrative staff responsibilities in the KSA. One study by Al-Othman (2014) claims that the lack of inclusive education in the KSA is due to the employment of irresponsible senior administrative staff who lack both SEN qualifications and experience of inclusive schooling. Al-Qahtani (2005) reports that unsuitably qualified

principals of inclusive schools suffer from high levels of stress compared to their colleagues who are more qualified for the role. Thus, the more the teachers are qualified and trained, the more effectively they are able to meet their responsibilities.

4.11. Theme 9: Staff knowledge

Staff knowledge of special educational needs can come from the attendance at teacher training courses, in service training days, or even from informal discussions with other staff and inspectors. Staff knowledge may be in areas that include international agreements (e.g., UN); legislation and policy about special needs education and inclusion for pre-school, both in the national context (from the Saudi government) or international (researchers in other countries); and in religious writings (in this case, in Islam). In the UK, Golder et al. (2005) state that the knowledge of teachers is the most important attribute required for inclusive education, providing knowledge about how special educational needs might arise, how such children might be identified, and how their learning can be improved. They have produced a strategy framework comprising a set of steps for assessment and intervention which can help teachers know how to proceed, and how to follow a code of practice with children they suspect require special educational needs (ibid.). This has been observed with newly qualified primary teachers continuing to gain knowledge about special educational needs during their first year of teaching, while they are working (Barber and Turner, 2007). Even though these teachers had received a minimum standard of competence in special educational needs teaching during their teacher training it often required additional learning to properly understand SEN in a real classroom as well as how to identify children who might require additional support. The importance of knowledge and skills were overarching themes expressed by new teachers.

Much of the academic literature on staff knowledge seems to focus on what teachers may have learnt about SEN during their training, followed by what they have learnt from a variety of sources while working in the classroom. However, there is less apparent interest in establishing how well teachers are following the guidelines laid down by external bodies on the subject of inclusive education. For my analysis of staff knowledge in this study, I used a range of research techniques (i.e. documentary

analysis, interviews, and questionnaires) in order to collect more data with which to triangulate between the four pre-schools included in this study.

4.11.1. Documentary Data

Relatively little documentary data are available in the KSA regarding staff knowledge *per se*. The documentation concerning special educational needs and Saudi schools gives academic requirements for the teachers, but it provides limited details about what they might be expected to know (Al-khashrami, 2004). The documentation includes knowledge of the inclusion requirements. However, details about staff knowledge about Saudi policy and children's rights are lacking. Therefore, the teachers should have sufficient knowledge of SEN Saudi policy in order to be able to meet their responsibilities effectively.

Knowledge and qualifications of practitioners is an essential element of determining how effectively inclusion can take place. Moreover, this needs to be addressed with regards to the senior administration of inclusive schools. The current appointed principals were developed during a period where a knowledge of inclusion was almost non-existent as part of basic teacher and leadership training (Al-Othman, 2014). Additionally, training programmes need to be devised to meet the needs of these senior staff to keep them up to date with current inclusive teaching practice and policies. As and when pre-school teachers are equipped with the knowledge and experience to successfully promote the inclusion of children with disabilities during their teacher training at university, the likelihood of witnessing inclusion in the KSA will increase dramatically.

4.12. Theme 10: Staff Attitudes

An important theme for inclusion in pre-school education is teachers' attitudes. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) showed that although UK teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusive practices, they were nevertheless critical of the concept and implementation of total inclusion. Attitudes were found to be highly dependent on the severity of a disability and – also of great importance – the availability of physical and human support. The authors concluded that a significant restructuring of

mainstream school environments would be required if children with significant disabilities were to be included. Training was also considered to be a top priority. Reviewing the literature concerning the views of primary school teachers on the concept of inclusion De Boer et al. (2011) found that most teachers are typically either neutral or negative with respect to inclusion, although attitudes were affected by training, experience, and the type of disability under discussion. More training among primary school teachers was found to increase positivity about inclusion (ibid.).

4.13. Documentary Data

Limited documentation concerning the attitudes of staff involved with SEN children exists in Saudi Arabia. Government inspectors do observe attitudes, but the reports on their inspections are not made available to the public. A number of studies by Saudi universities have examined school staff attitudes with respect to SEN. For example, the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusion have been examined in state schools (Al Samdi, 2010). Three dimensions of the attitudes were assessed: psychological, social and academic. Al Samdi (2010) found that the vast majority of teachers had a positive attitude towards inclusion; however, the study highlighted the need for further research, such as in the administrative sector.

The attitudes of school staff members in the KSA towards inclusion at schools were investigated by Al-Abduljabbar and Masoud (2000). The sample included principals, teachers and SEN teachers. Findings showed that there was a marked division in the varying opinions regarding inclusion amongst staff members in relation to their post, level of education and knowledge of specific disabilities. Staff responses displayed lack of knowledge relating to the inclusion of children with disabilities. Furthermore, the type of disability seemed to have an impact on staff attitudes towards inclusion. However, members of staff who were equipped with SEN training displayed a positive attitude towards inclusion.

A recent study carried out in the KSA by AlHudaithi (2015) aimed to determine the attitudes of female teachers towards autism inclusion. The study comprised 600 female teachers from mainstream schools and autism specialist institutes; and

employed the use of questionnaires, open-ended questions and interviews. The findings suggested that most teachers held a positive attitude towards autism inclusion but were unprepared for this type of inclusion to be implemented immediately. Therefore, training, professional development and awareness could help equip these educators to implement inclusion of autism in the classroom.

Given that documentation on the attitudes of Saudi teachers was limited, this theme was further investigated through the use of questionnaires and interviews as outlined below.

4.14. Theme 11: Parental attitudes

The attitudes and views of parents are important for all children, but perhaps of particular importance for children who have disabilities or special educational needs. Pruitt et al. (1998) interviewed the parents of children with SEN and argued that parents should ideally be equal members of a child's education team, but found that parents often feel that educators fail to encourage their participation. The parents expressed their grievances and offered suggestions for improving their relationships with the school staff, including encouraging educators to listen to parents; create and implement concrete strategies to improve communication; strive to be sensitive to the needs of the whole family; continue to learn about disabilities; and accommodate individual needs (ibid.). With some justification, parents feel they know their children better than anyone else and that they can represent them best. By schools working with parents the latter can feel they have some power in the collaboration between parent and educator. Armstrong et al. (2005) recognise the importance of parental attitudes and the parents' ability to parent if a child with disabilities is to be able to deal with adversity; structure, discipline and clear communications all help. This, together with social support, can lead to positive outcomes.

In the context of this research, there was little in either the UN or Saudi policy documentation concerning the attitudes or views of parents and how their worries could be best addressed. Hence, I have selected interviews as the most appropriate data collection tools with which to analyse this theme.

4.15. Theme 12: Parental knowledge

The parents of children with disabilities are as varied as the children in terms of their ability, their knowledge about their child's condition, and their willingness to learn more. Educated parents, and particularly those who understand English, are able to access a wealth of information on the Internet and from specialists they are able to contact. However, this is beyond the ability of many parents. Earlier research by Haussler and Kurtz-Costes (1998) explored these issues by interviewing parents of children with autism. The main aim of their study was to investigate why parents had selected a particular programme for their child. The parents were asked about their knowledge of programme features and care settings, as well as how involved the parents were in the programme. Although some of their worries were similar to those of most other parents (e.g., having concerns over the safety, care, and cleanliness of their children), others were specific to parents with autistic children. In the latter category were worries about adaptive skills, the presence of special services, the need for small group sizes, and concern about the design of individualised programmes. The authors found that these parents had not extensively researched the options open to them, but that they did have good knowledge about health and safety, discipline and daily activities in their child's centre (*ibid.*). Although some features that were rated by the parents as being very important were not actually present for their children, they were generally shown to be both knowledgeable and satisfied with the education that was being offered. The authors suggest that there should be training programmes set up so that parents can learn about the condition, their child, and individual programmes so that the best decision can be made about where to place their child (*ibid.*).

Janus et al. (2008) found that even parents of SEN children in Canada who were well educated, in work, and in stable two-parent families still had little contact with the schools their children were attending. In those situations that they did, this interaction tended to be initiated by the parents themselves. About half of the parents who participated were not aware of any communications between the school and other, previous services that their children had been using. Furthermore, there was a significant delay from the schools in implementing the services required by these

children, highlighting a gulf between the policy and its execution (ibid.). I used interviews to better understand the knowledge which parents of SEN children have. The previous 12 themes were discussed in terms of the four pre-schools. Details of the analysis are presented in the following sections.

4.16. Case studies

In the previous section, the themes arising from the research were identified. Findings from the four case studies are presented in the following sections. As suggested in section 3.5, the application of a case study approach can give a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by gaining a broad range of opinions, attitudes and perspectives from stakeholders (Cohen et al., 2007). Within each pre-school, interviews were carried out with the full range of participants. Table 16 illustrates the role within the sample that each staff member played in each of the pre-schools.

Table 16: The role of the sample in the pre-schools

Sample	Their role of pre -school staff
Teacher	Using her skills, in the growth characteristics of the age group, and setting the environment that will allow the maximum comprehensive growth of children including SEN children, taking into consideration individual differences.
SEN teacher	Providing one-to-one sessions to SEN children inside and outside the classroom.
Teacher assistant	Supporting teacher and help children develop.
Nanny – maid	To look after the SEN child by helping them do their daily routine (eating, moving, toileting, etc).
Parent remain with SEN child at the pre-school	To look after the SEN child by helping them do their daily routine (eating, moving, toileting, etc).

Coordinator	To allocate and evaluate the responsibilities to the staff members.
Classroom Inspectors	To inspect the learning environment and teachers' performance towards all children in the classroom.
SEN Inspectors	To inspect the teachers' performance towards SEN children in addition to evaluating the learning environment.

4.17. Pre-schools' daily structure

The daily structure of the pre-school provision has two mechanisms. First is the structure within which the values and the expectations are placed on the pre-schools and the children, whilst the second one follows the guidelines as set down by the MOE, 2016. This requires all pre-schools in the KSA to begin with 'circle time' and during the day the provision should also include an 'outdoor time', a 'breakfast or eating time', a 'work -free time (free play)', and a 'final circle time' with two classroom activities.' This was seen in all of the four pre-schools. Thus, I could argue here that the variables were controlled, as the research populations were similar in terms of structure.

The Pre-schools' Specialised Factors for teachers written by the National Centre for Assessment in Higher Education (2015) describe the educational techniques application and values required by the pre-school teachers to achieve optimum practice (see Appendix 7). The factors concentrate on performance and outcome tasks, which pre-school teachers need to master. In addition, these structures depend on the comprehensive development pattern, and the education-focused pattern of the child who has become the cornerstone of the modern systems and international educational bodies. The factors also include knowledge, expertise and the trends which are related to the specialisation.

The factors are divided into six major structures, which are:

- Growth fields
- Syllabus and teaching methodology

- Educational environment
- Interaction and guidance
- Calendar
- Partnership with the family

All of the pre-schools in my study were seen to be following the MOE structuring agenda of the evaluation of the children. Moreover, each child with or without disabilities has their individual file which includes what the expectations for the child are, and what they have achieved. They should have achieved 60% or above by the end of the academic year in order for them to transfer to the next level. [Please see Appendix 13 for more information.]

4.18. Pre-school One (PS1)

The first case study took place in a private pre-school (Figure 6), located in East Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The pre-school building comprises of four floors. It was not purpose-built as a pre-school; however, it was renovated to meet the needs of children both with and without disabilities, and is rented. However, the level of the improvement and the facilities do not meet the standard level of a learning environment because of the lack of facilities (as discussed later). The pre-school also did not take into consideration the health and safety of the children. It appeared to be shabby and lacked adequate resources. Timings were from seven o'clock in the morning until half past one in the afternoon. The pre-school has 12 classes, 13 teachers, and 163 children (aged 4-6 years old). This gives a child to staff ratio of 13:1. The mean class size is 14 children. At the time it was visited, the pre-school had 53 children with special educational needs, representing one third of the total population of children. The special educational needs include physical disabilities, autism, deafness and Down syndrome. The pre-school receives funding from the government for each SEN child accepted. They also require the parents to pay triple the normal level of fees for children with disabilities (about £3000 per year). It is well known that children at this pre-school come from a working class background.



Figure 6: Pre-school one building

4.18.1. Questionnaire outcomes: Pre-school one (PS1)

All respondents from pre-school one had undergraduate degrees. These were mainly in special educational needs and pre-school teaching, but also in Arabic language and sociology. Moreover, two had postgraduate qualifications. However, when asked about additional special educational needs training as part of their post, only 15% of respondents agreed or strong agreed, and they also confirmed that it is readily accessible and available. Half of the respondents, however, stated that they had not received any further training at their institution – see Figure 7.

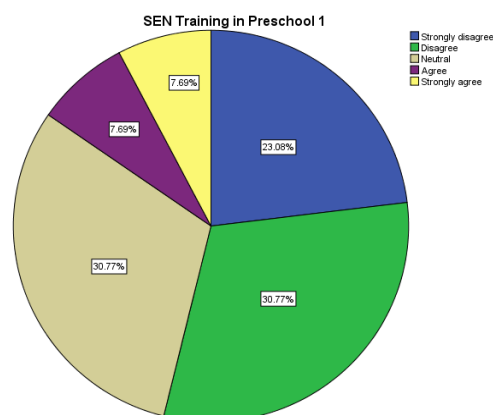


Figure 7: SEN Training in PS1

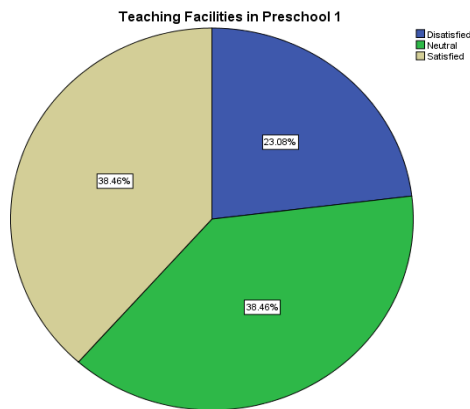


Figure 8: Teaching Facilities in PS1

In terms of teaching facilities in PS1, there were clear differences in the responses to the questionnaire. Approximately 38% of the teachers replied to the question concerning specialist equipment for special educational needs by stating that it is available. However, it should be noted that they were not asked about the specifics concerning equipment. This indicates that only 23% of the participating pre-schools lack specialist equipment, an issue that should be addressed. Even more problematic are the findings of the question concerning specialist facilities for special educational needs. Here one quarter of the respondents indicated that these were not available. These findings contrast with the responses on the subject of specialist staff, in which more than half of the respondents responded that specialist staff are present. This raises question of how the specialist staff manage with relatively little equipment and very poor facilities, although no specific answer is available from current data – see Figure 8.

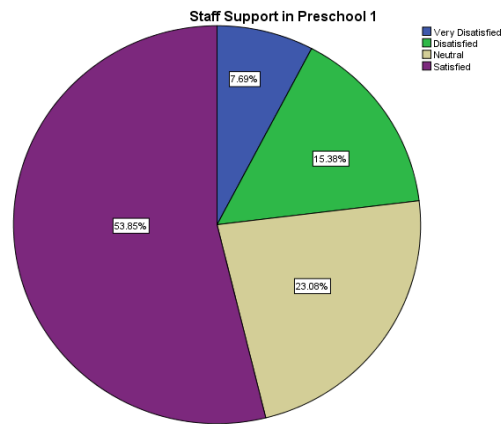


Figure 9: Staff Support in PS1

The main questionnaire responses with respect to staff relationships in PS1 come from the question concerning the support given to teachers with SEN children in their classes. It is revealing that only 23% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the level of support (see Figure 9). This type of support can come from assistant teachers and maids; however, there should also be specialist provision and senior support staff. Certainly, good working relationships with these senior staff are particularly vital for teachers with limited training and experience in special educational needs. On the other hand, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that there is support given to teachers with SEN children in their classes in PS1.

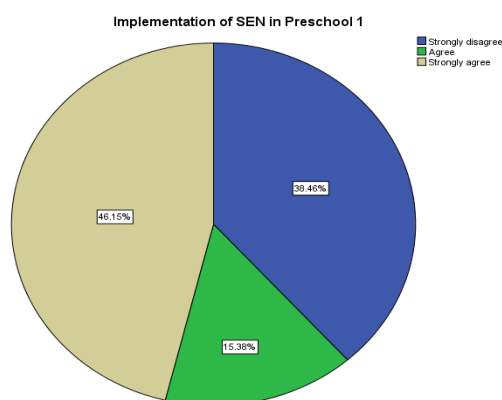


Figure 10: Policy Implementation in PS1

The findings from the questionnaire indicate a generally positive attitude towards policy implementation in pre-school one. Over 60% of the respondents in this pre-

school stated that there is a good implementation of policy for inclusion in their own pre-school (see Figure 10). However, approximately 38% of the respondents in PS1 strongly disagreed that there is implementation of the inclusion policy in their pre-school.

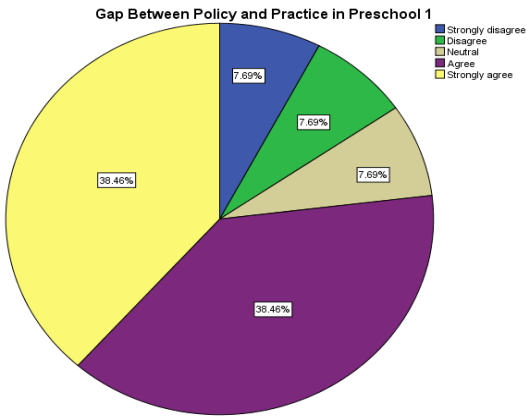


Figure 11: Gap between Policy and Practice in PS1

In terms of the gap between policy and practice in PS1, Figure 11 illustrates that the vast majority of questionnaire respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that there are major gaps between policy and practice implementation with respect to children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Approximately 15% of respondents in pre-school one disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement that there are gaps between policy and practice in their own pre-school.

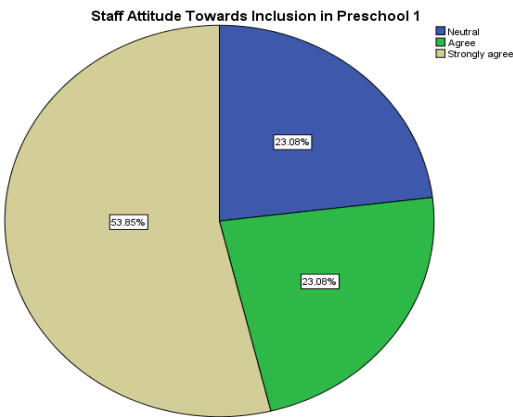


Figure 12: Staff Attitudes towards Inclusion in PS1

The most important question in the questionnaire, which reveals staff attitudes, is the one concerning their views about inclusion. Figure 12 shows how 77% of those responding either agreed or strongly agreed with inclusion. Generally it is assumed that inclusion is better than separation for most children with disabilities. Whether this attitude transfers to the classroom is more difficult to determine.

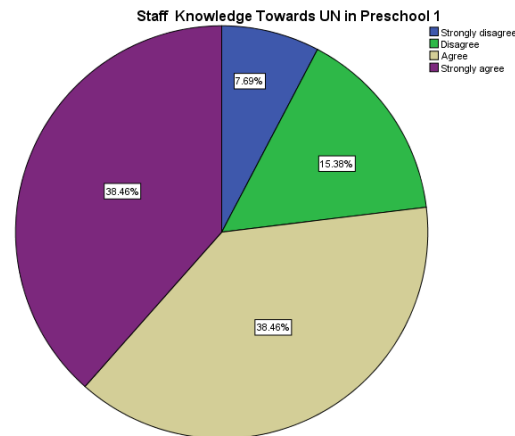


Figure 13: Staff Knowledge of UNCRC in PS1

The questionnaires indicated that there was a high level concerning the knowledge of the UN policy. Approximately 77% knew that the Saudi government had signed the UN Convention for Human Rights, while only 16% of the staff did not have any idea regarding this matter – see Figure 13.

4.18.2. Interview outcomes from Pre-school one (PS1)

When asked whether special educational needs support was available to address the outcomes from the academic background, just under half of respondents stated that qualified SEN staff were available in order to help them with SEN children in their pre-schools. These qualified staff were able to provide a degree of support, e.g., equipping blind children with braille texts, communicating via sign language to deaf children, and providing specialised books for SEN children along with constant one-to-one support. Almost all of the staff knew who to ask, and knew whether qualified staff were present and able to assist. Although the Saudi government has acknowledged the importance of effective teacher training, these findings show that

the training of teachers for the field of special education could and should be improved further.

In this case, the head teacher had '*a background in sociology*', five teachers had degrees in early childhood education, and another had a degree in Arabic language. One of the teachers had a Master's degree in SEN.

The findings from the interviews about SEN experience (Theme 2) show that the majority of staff (head/deputy head/class teacher/special education needs teacher/class assistant) spoke of their experience in teaching in general, rather than SEN experiences specifically. Their teaching experience varied from 1.5 to 14 years (Mean: 9.1 +/-7.0 years; SD: standard deviation). Staff sometimes mentioned how long they had been at their present pre-school and how long they had been involved in pre-school teaching.

One teacher stated that she had three years' experience in teaching pre-school. With respect to special educational needs, one teacher spoke about attending special education needs workshops, but she did not mention how this was reflected or experienced in the classroom. However, there were four participants who mentioned SEN in the classroom:

'continuous special educational needs experience in the classroom'; '5 years' experience with SEN'; 'being an SEN teacher with 4 years' experience'; '9 years' experience of working at a pre-school with children who have a mental disability.'

One of the teachers was surprised by the lack of skill shown by other teachers, commenting:

'I am surprised how some other teachers are not well qualified and they don't have any experience of how to deal with the children. Some of them lose their patience very quickly when dealing with children with disabilities starting to blame them when they do not respond to their orders.' PS1T

It is clear from these responses that experience can play an essential role when dealing with children with disabilities. In this sense, other participants emphasised that this experience helped them to deal with different types of disability, as one teacher expressed in the following statement:

'For me, I have six years' experience dealing with children with physical disabilities. However, this year I had an autistic child in my classroom. I do not have any experience with a mental disability. But to be honest, I did not find it as hard to deal with him as I expected. At the beginning I was worried because I hadn't dealt with autistic children before. But my previous experience with physical disabilities helped me to deal with him.' PS1T

However, one other teacher argued that dealing with new types of disability was challenging for her although she was very experienced.

'Absolutely it was not easy for me to deal with physical disability. Especially when she asks to move between corners in the class so she needs extra support and time. It was very harmful and stressful for me. Maybe because I didn't face this case before, dealing with physical disability.' PS1T

The data suggest the following conclusions can be drawn from the interviews with regards to staff-child relationships (theme 3). The majority of the teachers attempted to add materials/resources to aid the SEN children in their classes, sometimes paying for these from their personal finances. Staff generally cooperated with one another to provide care for children with disabilities at the pre-school, such as in helping children with physical disabilities to visit the toilet, facilitating lunchtimes, or helping them to move around pre-school.

In PS1, teaching plans and procedures for extra curricula activities were prepared, and parents were included in these. The SEN teacher stated that for a six-year-old girl with autism she had prepared extra writing activities; these were placed into the child's portfolio and extra homework was given to the parents and the teacher. In general, the SEN children took part in three sessions per week (20 minutes) with a SEN specialist. There was some provision for teaching sign language to deaf children, and specialist attempts to modify disruptive behaviour were also conducted. Furthermore, in this pre-school, the presence or absence of support staff was discussed. The head teacher said that:

'There was no problem placing a child with a physical disability with an assistant teacher; however children with a mental disability require the presence of a member of staff qualified in special educational needs.' PS1H

The findings from the interviews reveal both positive and negative views about staff relationships (theme 4). Senior staff in PS1 (heads/deputy heads/owners) all

commented positively about their staff and the relationships between members of the team.

In PS1 the head teacher claimed that the collaboration between parents, teachers and the community contributes to ongoing success for the children and the pre-school. However, there were also negative comments. One teacher complained about a general lack of sincerity and honesty at work, while another teacher felt there was a lack of ability in PS1 to learn from others. Another confessed that the team spirit is missing at her pre-school, adding that certain teachers refused to accept advice from her about special educational needs. She claimed that despite providing workshops for the teachers, there was no response from them. One SEN teacher said:

'Some of the teachers didn't accept advice from me about SEN children, so when I spend 20 minutes with each child but afterwards teachers do not follow my instructions; so the child loses a lot of skills because of the missing link between my work with them and the support they get in the classroom.' PS1T

Many teachers stated that they enjoyed a good working line of communication with parents. One SEN teacher described how she first observed a four-year-old child who has Down syndrome and then formulated a plan, which was discussed with other teachers and the parents and this proved to have a positive impact on the child's abilities. One parent said she saw the teachers weekly.

Another teacher claimed that her relationship with parents is excellent; adding that she tries to ensure regular attention is given to the parents of any children with disabilities. Therefore, she contacts them after class, giving parents the opportunity to assist children who require more time and effort with their work outside of pre-school. She also encourages parents to provide greater attention and assistance to their children's studies. To this end, she provides parents with a target sheet for their child, enabling parents to ensure that their child is reaching those targets at home. In complete contrast, a different pre-school teacher said she only contacts parents and other teachers 'if necessary'.

In the interviews, little was mentioned by pre-school staff and/or parents directly concerning an SEN strategy (theme 5). However, many of the teachers discussed how

much of their work was concerned with strategic designs for the education of SEN children in their pre-schools.

In PS1, a SEN teacher commented that:

'There was a missing link between the work I did with SEN children and what they did afterwards in their classrooms, so that the SEN policy was not being implemented. Also, there was little funding available for resources for SEN children, again something that would go against strategy.' PS1T

To my disappointment, I found that this particular pre-school was generally unwelcoming of SEN children and this was supported by the interviewee, who felt that the pre-school should therefore change its approach and provisions to better accommodate them. Another SEN teacher at the same pre-school felt that there was too much grouping of SEN children together.

The findings from my investigations into the SEN strategies in Saudi pre-schools also produced a number of contrasting results. I conducted an interview with one senior government official: the head of the SEN department at the MOE in Jeddah. She expressed her confidence about the achievements in regards to SEN strategy to date:

'We did not spare any effort to help improve the educational system especially for SEN children by offering help and support for both pre-schools and families. For example, when SEN parents asked for our guidance to find local pre-schools for their children we acted directly as a team to find the most suitable pre-school for the child depending on his type of disability.' SGO

The findings from the interviews with staff and parents in PS1 reveal varying degrees of knowledge (themes 9 and 12) and willingness to implement policies concerning inclusion.

In PS1, the head teacher said that the Ministry of Education inspectors were happy to permit her to open the pre-school, as there had been a lack of such provision in the area. She then described the assessment plan in place for prospective SEN children, which was intended to ensure that only SEN children with a certain level of disability are accepted. There was no problem in accepting children with physical disabilities, but children with mental disability needed a qualified member of staff to work with

them. The deputy head said the pre-school follows the government guidelines, and that all the required paperwork is produced (theme 5).

The SEN coordinator at PS1 also said that she generally follows the rules laid down by the Ministry of Education (theme 6). However, she also claimed that the pre-school placed too much emphasis on listening to the views of parents, rather than doing what the staff considered to be the best for each child. One SEN teacher complained about the general lack of support from the Ministry of Education:

'The Ministry sends generic plans for special educational needs but with no specific guidelines for children with different disabilities.' PS1T

However, she did appreciate the efforts of the government inspector who had visited and was encouraging about her work. A second SEN teacher was critical of the pre-school, noting failures in its approach to teaching children with SEN as well as to general limitations in its inclusion policy. However, a third SEN teacher stated a willingness to follow the MOE rules concerning how to deal with children who have disabilities, despite being surprised to learn that the Ministry refused any interventions before the age of six. One teacher at this pre-school complained:

'There were two different inspectors, one for the classrooms and one for special educational needs, and this meant two different strategies and opinions, thus creating conflict.' PS1T

The parents from PS1 had little to say about policy implementation (theme 6), as they were primarily concerned with government finance.

Interview data about the learning environment (theme 7) collected from PS1 suggested that many of the staff felt that the environment was very poor. One SEN teacher confessed that she perceived the pre-school to be unwelcoming to SEN children, and even the SEN coordinator said the resources were greatly in need of improvement. One teacher complained that:

'Educational tools should be available to teachers and there is no intervention from our pre-school.' PS1T

Moreover, one SEN teacher complained about financial issues, saying that:

'The KSA has a very high budget and those responsible for the education should pay more attention to the needs of pre-schools and children, and work to improve the educational and social interaction of children and teachers.'
PS1T

The mother of a girl with a disability at the same pre-school said that the building was not suited to children with physical disabilities, as her daughter had to climb four floors of stairs to get to her classroom. As a consequence of this, the parents decided to pay additional fees in order to specifically hire a maid to care for her daughter throughout the day at pre-school, in order to ensure she did not get tired or experience any risk while using the stairs.

In the interviews with staff in PS1, I found many different views about staff responsibilities (theme 8), particularly with regards to SEN children.

One teacher claimed to be responsible for ten SEN children, in addition to her teaching duties. The teacher of early years' children claimed that she had almost continuous contact with the SEN children in her classroom. Despite this, she noted that no extra salary was given as reward for these special educational needs responsibilities. Another classroom teacher claimed to have a class of 25 children, five of whom were deaf. While she felt that the number was too high, her salary was not supplemented due to the particular responsibilities that her role entailed with the children who had special educational needs. This teacher had the responsibility of explaining deafness to the hearing children; however, she had requested specialist resources and equipment, even though this might take a long time to be put in place.

Another teacher talked about the extensive protocol and long time period required with respect to the assessment of potential SEN children. Under this system, each child first has to be reported to the head teacher and to the MOE, after which a government official arranges a meeting to conduct a psychological analysis. Special needs teachers also had varied responsibilities. One had responsibility for 23 SEN children, and spent three 20-minute sessions with these children each week, as well as conducting classroom observations. She felt that some children with disabilities were not being helped much by their classroom teachers.

At the same pre-school, another SEN teacher was responsible for assessing the education levels of her children, while the SEN coordinator had responsibility for the diagnostic tests, as well as any duties relating to her specialism in speech therapy. She also observed teachers in the classroom and worked closely with teachers and parents. She was yet another specialist who commented about the lack of ability in the pre-school to deal with SEN children (theme 8). Conversely the same teacher complained that parents might be expecting too much from the pre-school.

The findings of the interviews revealed different levels of knowledge among the staff (theme 9). Some of those interviewed claimed to have knowledge of policy concerning special educational needs, while few did not speak about this.

In PS1, most of the staff were found to have some knowledge about special educational needs and the ways in which inclusion might be accomplished. The head teacher was knowledgeable about assessment, transport, requirements and the need for specialists. In addition, she claimed to be aware of the rules of the UN, but unaware of the rights of the Child Convention. The deputy head teacher was knowledgeable about government regulations, but it was unclear whether she was properly acquainted with children's rights legislation (theme 9).

One SEN teacher said she knew and followed the rules of the Ministry of Education about children with disabilities, but she felt that the pre-school was not a good environment for these children. This teacher spoke about the need for workshops to be delivered to staff and parents in order to increase their knowledge about children's rights. She also said:

'Policy makers should pay more attention to the needs of pre-schools and children. I had not been given any information about children's rights, but I did know about Islamic rights.' PS1T

The interviews served to assess the attitudes of staff (theme 10), as well as the opinions of parents about the attitudes of staff. In PS1, the head teacher said:

'I am happy to welcome children with disabilities and also pleased with the pre-school staff. I would prefer to have more specialist staff, but I try to develop and deliver staff training on special educational needs.' PS1H

However, she complained that some parents did not want to hear the truth about their child's abilities. The SEN coordinator claimed to be working closely with teachers and parents, with a focus on the parents. She also felt they often listened too much to parents as opposed to doing what was best for the children. She was, thought, generally positive about the staff, including the specialists on the staff.

The SEN teachers were interviewed in PS1. The first did not complain about resources, despite many of the books dating back to the 1970s. However, she was critical of the pre-school environment, claiming that it was not welcoming or accommodating of SEN children (theme 7). She expressed the belief that there was a shortage of qualified staff, with the consequence that some of the children with disabilities were not being helped. However, she also felt that a good relationship existed between teachers and management.

One teacher stated that the PS1 administration cooperated well with the teachers (theme 4). However, she was surprised about the relative lack of qualifications and SEN experience among the staff. She confessed that many teachers ignored the SEN children, with the result that many of their individual needs were neglected.

In addition, teachers would sometimes not follow instructions given to them, meaning that the child would have no link between specialist instructions and the work being carried out in the classroom (theme 6). This particular teacher said that she tried to add materials to the learning resources room, but no funds were available. She also voiced concerns about the attitudes of some of the parents of children with disabilities, claiming that they seemed to have no real interest in their children's education. Because of this, she felt that workshops would be a useful tool for parents as well as staff.

One teacher at the same pre-school complained that her classroom was upstairs which caused difficulties for children with physical facilities. She added that she was paid no extra salary for her duties with respect to special educational needs and that, while she had managed to obtain some resources for her classroom. She said:

'I was shocked when I started working at the pre-school; the environment of the pre-school was very poor for SEN children.' PS1T

Despite the previous statements, this teacher was quite positive about inclusion as a principle for all the children and for society in general, and she had begun teaching the children sign language to foster inclusion in her classroom.

One of the pre-school teachers claimed that there might be too many children with deafness in her class because too few teachers or children know sign language. She expressed gratitude for her assistant who appeared to spend a large amount of time in the creation of resources and the introduction of SEN children into the class (theme 8).

The inspector reported the teaching was excellent, but teachers had to create their own resources. She noted that all staff helped each other in taking care of children with disabilities, e.g., going to the toilet, at lunchtimes, and moving around the pre-school. The assistant teacher supported the complaint of her colleagues regarding the lack of facilities and transport; however, she noted that staff share and collaborate with one another, in terms of resources and lesson plans.

There were a significant number of comments about parental attitudes (theme 11) and views from the pre-school staff during the interviews, and parents were also willing to express their views during the interviews.

For example, in PS1, the head teacher complained about the attitude of some parents, stating that they were biased and that they always wanted to hear that the performance of their child in pre-school was outstanding. As this obviously was not always the case, the head teacher felt that this put extra pressure on her and her staff.

On the other hand, one SEN teacher suggested that some parents simply wanted to dump their children in any pre-school that would accept them, even if that would not help the children achieve. On the other hand, a parent at this same school said:

'I am pleased that my child was spending six hours a day with other children, even if he had not yet settled in the pre-school.' PS1P

She was also pleased that the pre-school provided transport. Another parent said she was happy to find a place for her daughter and that she was pleased there were specialist teachers available. Although she sent a maid to pre-school with her daughter, this did not always work out well. Additionally, while her daughter was not

benefiting much from whole class sessions, the one-to-one sessions in the pre-school had significantly improved her academic ability. The mother confessed that she would not complain, but said:

'Parents and teachers ideally should work together to aid the development and education of SEN children, but often this does not happen.' PS1P

During one interview, a senior government official in special educational needs spoke about parental knowledge and possible sources that the parents might access in the government to find out more information. She said that government departments for education and social services had links concerning the welfare of SEN children, which is something that parents should be made aware of.

In PS1, while two of the teachers did not talk about parental knowledge (theme 12), a third spoke about the benefits of including parents in the preliminary plans for new children in the pre-school. She was critical of the pre-school's approach to working and communicating with parents, expressing the view that little was done to keep them properly informed by the management.

This was in direct contrast to what the parents of SEN children in this school said. One parent stated that she herself was a teacher and had therefore had the opportunity to attend workshops run by charities and parents about autism, as well as to meet with her child's teachers at least once a week. She was nevertheless ignorant about the qualifications of the teachers helping her child. She was not permitted into her child's classroom.

Another parent said that she had had difficulty finding a pre-school for her daughter but the Disabled Children's Association of Saudi Arabia (discussed on page 12) finally helped her. She said had been made aware of Saudi policy but she still had doubts about whether this would help her child.

4.18.3. Observation for pre-school one (PS1):

The attention and time provided to children with disabilities in this pre-school varied between teachers, which may have been attributable to the amount of experience each teacher had (theme 2). For example, I observed one teacher with seven years'

experience in early years and dealing with SEN children. This teacher had two girls with physical disabilities in her classroom and she was able to give equal attention and time to all of the children in the class. In contrast, at the same pre-school, another teacher had only one year of pre-school teaching experience. Although she had only one boy in her classroom with physical disability, she found it difficult to deal with him and to give every child equivalent attention (theme 8).

In addition, the facilities provided to children with disabilities affected the staff-child relationships (theme 3). For example, the fact that there is only one toilet per floor made it challenging for staff to provide help as and when required. Moreover, in PS1, there is no access to toilets for children with disabilities.

From the observations there appeared to be relatively little interaction between members of staff. When assistants were present, they often seemed to take the responsibility for the care of the SEN children. Although some teachers were seen to chat with each other, this was not directed towards the individual children with SEN.

Observations of individual children are difficult to attach to a particular SEN policy, but there are certainly aspects where I observed that policy concerning inclusion was lacking. Many of the children with disabilities in this pre-school either stayed on their own, seemed to be happier separated from the main group, or tended to mix with other SEN children (theme 6).

It is difficult to determine from short-term observations how much of the Saudi policy towards special educational needs inclusion is being implemented in the pre-school classrooms visited. However, there are signs that some staff knew of the policies and were attempting to implement them (themes 6 and 9). For example, I saw many instances during which the teachers tried to integrate children with disabilities and those without. Unfortunately, these attempts were largely unsuccessful, perhaps because the teachers asked the children with disabilities to play with others, rather than the other way around.

One of the classrooms was found actually to be outside the main pre-school building, positioned in an area not designed as a classroom. The atmosphere was damp and unhealthy. Facilities such as toilets were sometimes down a narrow corridor, or had

narrow doors, or were even outside the main building and the pre-school also lacked a dining room that was accessible for children with disabilities. Fortunately there were staff to help move the children around, although one child with a physical disability required more than one member of staff to move him into the playground and the outdoor play areas, mostly covered with artificial turf, but with no special toys for the SEN children (theme 7).

The following example from pre-school one is a typical observation I conducted.

'Between 10 and 10.30am I observed Mohammed, six years old who has Down syndrome, during playtime. There was only one teacher outside with the nine children. Mohammed was running and walking around, not interacting with any other children and with no real goals. The teacher observed the children, but apparently only with respect to their safety. She sat on the stairs and seemed to be worn out. She shouted out if any of the children were naughty, but did not move.'

This may indicate some of the teachers' less positive attitudes toward the inclusion of SEN children into the pre-school educational environment.

One of the teachers seemed to focus her attention on the more able children, making relatively little effort to ensure that the SEN children were placed where they could be included. In one situation, an SEN child was even asked to speak louder. The assistant teacher in this setting diverted the SEN children by clearing up instead of participating. One teacher was seen to be talking on her mobile rather than sitting with the children. Overall, it is difficult to determine how much of the actions of teachers were based on their learning about SEN. However, the efficient use of the resources appears to be a definite sign of increased learning amongst the pre-school teachers (theme 8).

Comments like 'being shy' or 'not interested' were given as reasons why the SEN children did not participate in (playtime). However, in at least one case, a child with a disability who attempted to integrate was ignored. In reality, factors such as limited access sometimes made it physically difficult for the SEN children to be included.

4.19. Pre-school Two (PS2)

The second case study is a state pre-school (four to six years) located in North Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The pre-school building was purpose-built and comprises one large spacious ground floor building, effectively catering for the needs of the children. The pre-school appeared to be well built and was very clean and tidy (see Figure 14). The pre-school timings are from 7am to 1:30pm. It is a much smaller establishment than pre-school one, with only three classes. Despite this, it employs more teachers than PS1 (14 as compared to 13), even though only 30 children attend. This means the child to staff ratio is close to 2:1, with 10 children per class. The number of SEN children in this pre-school is 22, which represents over 70% of the children attending. The children with special educational needs included autism, Down syndrome and physical disabilities. There are no extra costs for the parents of any children attending this pre-school and children are taken from mixed socio-economic backgrounds.



Figure 14: Pre-school Two building

4.19.1. Questionnaire outcomes in PS2:

All staff in PS2 were educated to a relatively high level. However, the findings from the questionnaires indicated that only 30% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had training in special educational needs, whereas around 40% of respondents confirmed that they did not receive any type of training in special educational needs (see Figure 15). It is strange that 29.41% of respondents did not express a clear view about the SEN training in their pre-school. However, this could

be attributed to the fact that the respondents do not have enough awareness of the importance of attending workshops and courses related to special education needs. Possibly, some staff were worried about their work if they declared that they did not receive any type of training for SEN, especially given the pre-school they are working in. Thus, staff are fully qualified to teach, but still lack experience and specific knowledge of how to deal with special education needs.

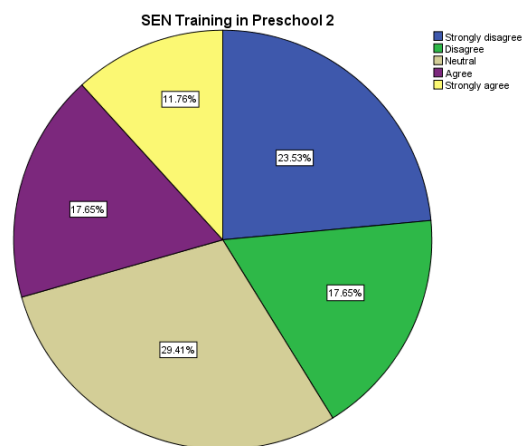


Figure 15: SEN Training in PS2

In terms of teaching facilities in PS2, around half of the respondents showed satisfaction with the special needs facilities (see Figure 16). However, it should be noted that over 40% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there are specialist facilities for SEN children in their classes.

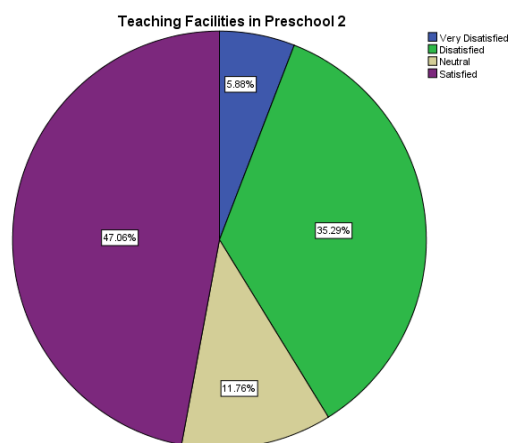


Figure 16: Teaching Facilities in PS2

Teachers who have SEN children in their classes can gain support from assistant teachers, maids and senior school staff. The answers from the question concerning this support revealed that 47% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the level of support. However, around 23% of the respondents did not show a clear statement in terms of level of support. Only 28% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the level of support – see Figure 17.

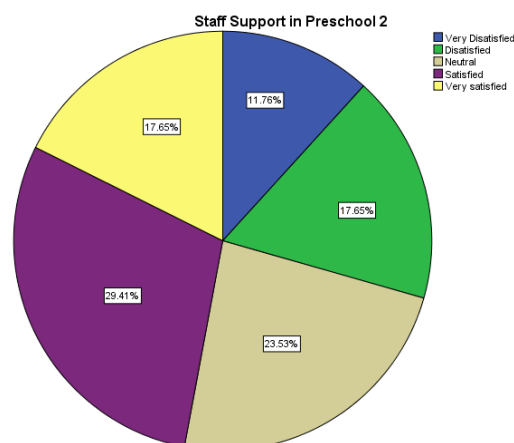


Figure 17: Staff Support in PS2

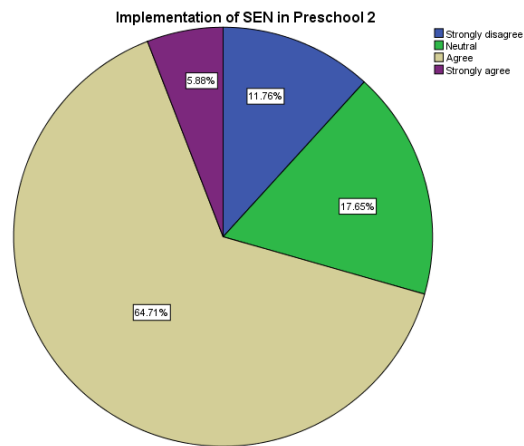


Figure 18: Implementation of SEN in PS2

The findings from the questionnaire indicate a generally positive attitude towards policy implementation. Over 60% of the respondents stated that there is a good implementation of policy for inclusion in their own pre-school (see Figure 18). However, only around 11% of the respondents in PS2 strongly disagreed that there is good implementation of the inclusion policy in their pre-school.

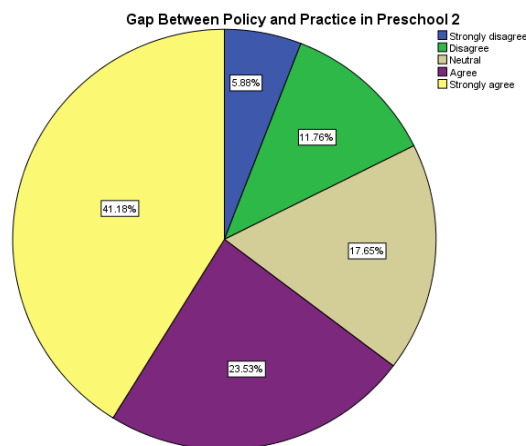


Figure 19: Gap between Policy and Practice in PS2

The results highlighted in Figure 19 suggest that the vast majority of questionnaire respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that there are major gaps between policy and practice implementation with respect to children with

disabilities, while approximately 18% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

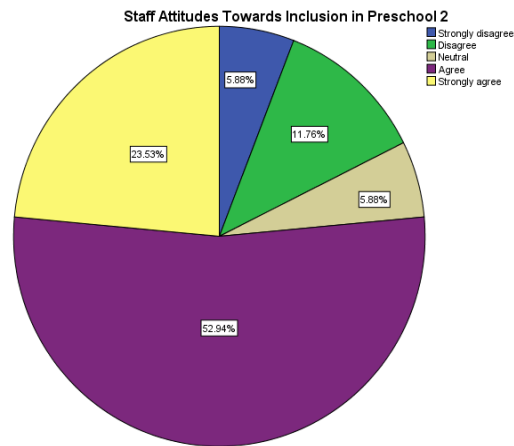


Figure 20: Staff Attitude towards Inclusion in PS2

In terms of staff attitudes toward inclusion policy, over half of the respondents agreed with the concept of inclusion and felt it was better than separation for most children with disabilities whereas only 17% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed – see Figure 20.

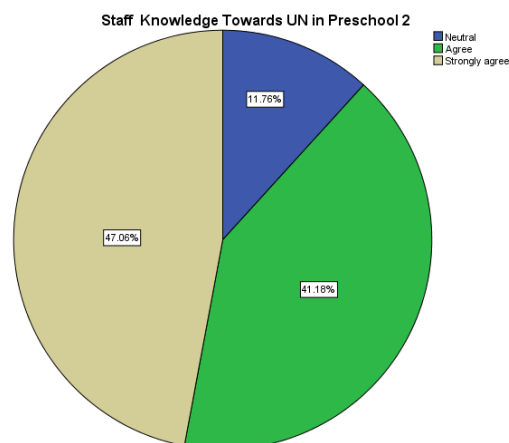


Figure 21: Staff Knowledge of UNCRC in PS2

There was also a high level of knowledge concerning the UN Convention. Approximately 89% of participants knew that the Saudi government had signed the UN Convention for Human Rights, while only around 12% of participants were neutral in their responses – see Figure 21.

4.19.2. Interview outcomes (PS2):

In PS2 one teacher had an '*academic background in sociology*', and another a degree in special education needs. It should also be noted that several teachers/assistant teachers were qualified in the provision of early years' education, but had no formal background in special educational needs (theme 1).

When asked about their level of experience (theme 2), the head teacher had 11 years' experience. She ensured that she used and applied her SEN experience to meet the individual needs of SEN children:

'I meet weekly with the teachers to find out what the best is that we could provide as a pre-school, and it's a good opportunity for us to share our experiences to improve the quality of education.' PS2H

The head teacher also spoke at length about parental attitudes. She believed that collaboration with staff, parents and the community was important in order to achieve success for SEN children and the pre-school as a whole. She noted that there were occasional high rates of absence from pre-school, which was potentially attributable to a lack of transportation and long distances.

One parent commented that she could not understand how teachers were supposed to deal with her child with autism when they did not have support, so she accompanied her child to pre-school each day:

'I accompanied my son during the school day so he would not be bullied.'

PS2P

One parent added that all her child's needs were fulfilled (health, education and more) and that the teachers made an effort to help the children socialise and to include them in group activities together with her child. Another parent stated that she was pleased with the specialist teachers and that was available for her child. This last parent drew particular attention to the individual one-to-one sessions that had visibly supported her daughter's academic ability, although she was less complimentary about the

general teaching sessions. Despite generally being pleased, this parent was critical of the fact that teachers did not encourage other children to play with her daughter.

According to the staff relation (theme 3), the PS2 head teacher stated that her teaching team was excellent, as they are setting annual targets and then requesting the tools necessary to meet these targets. Some teachers expressed similar views – one said:

'The pre-school administration is cooperating with the teachers'; 'there was a good relationship between teachers and management'; 'positive about relationships within the school between management and teachers'; 'the relationship between teachers is fantastic as they share resources, ideas and teaching practice on a regular basis.' PS2T

PS2 appeared to have an SEN policy (theme 5), and the pre-school had invested in a number of projects involving special educational needs. The head teacher claimed that the facilities were relatively good, targets were set for the SEN children, and inclusion was promoted overall. One teacher mentioned targets and inclusion and was happy about the Saudi policy concerning inclusion.

The head teacher also discussed the lengthy process needed before an SEN child could be offered a place. This was partly because it is possible that adaptation is required for the pre-school environment in order to properly meet the specific needs of the child. She was very much in favour of inclusion; where all levels of ability were present among the children in the same classroom this might be justified by the fact that the PS2 had some facilities in addition to the high number of teachers. Finally, while she complained about issues with finance, she did not comment about the government policy in other ways.

Likewise, one parent expressed satisfaction at the level of provision available for her son and another was pleased with the services provided for her daughter. Another teacher from the same pre-school was glad of their local environment, stating that it was welcoming and accommodating of children with disabilities. However, one teacher was concerned with the learning environment in terms of the lack of some resources (theme 7). She complained:

'I spent a great deal of time creating resources from scratch.' PS2T

In terms of staff knowledge (theme 9), although teachers may be knowledgeable about the policies relating to inclusion, there are a number of important obstacles facing the practical implementation of policy and procedures in this area. For example, one teacher stated:

'I am pleased how Saudi MOE considered SEN policy; however we are sometimes facing some difficulties in applying this policy in reality. One of the obstacles is the delays in founding from MOE.' PS2T

The consequence of this is that only parts of the Saudi policy concerning inclusion are presently being implemented.

One teacher had opinions about how to work with the parents. She reported that she tended to contact parents after class, especially for SEN children who require more time and effort. She claimed to encourage parents to provide attention and support, helping their children with their studies at home. In fact, she even provided parents with a target sheet for their child, so that they can ensure their children are reaching their targets and even help them to meet those targets. The parent of a child with SEN who was attending the same pre-school said she was pleasantly surprised with the level of educational support, especially the one-to-one sessions provided for her five-year-old son, who had physical disabilities. She attended with him, so he would not be bullied, but was obviously pleased with what was being done for her child. This parent had great concerns about the future for her son and expressed the fear that his education would be a major challenge in their life that will require considerable help in order for him to achieve. She also mentioned how happy her son was at the pre-school.

In clear contrast, another mother stated:

'I accept the destiny provided for me and my child and I surrender to the difficulties of our current situation. There are no words to describe how we suffer, with no help from the community or government. If the patient is expected to be patient, then the level of neglect should be condemned.'
PS2P

She had been reluctant to send her son which has physical disability to the pre-school, as no transport was provided and she did not want her child to be at pre-school with

many other children with disabilities (theme 11). She also did not seem to have achieved a level of trust in the pre-school, as she attended every day and was especially worried about bullying and how the staff might deal with this. However, the mother claimed that her son was happy at the pre-school, and that his health and educational needs were being met. She complimented the efforts of his teachers to encourage the children to socialise with one another and to engage in out-group activities.

One of the mothers interviewed was pleased with the services provided by the pre-school and stated that her six-year-old daughter with Down syndrome had settled in well, both socially and academically. However, either she or a maid attends every day to tend to the needs of her daughter. She had no complaints about staff, but said that SEN children in general do not have equal opportunities with respect to education and healthcare in Saudi Arabia.

In PS2, there was an extensive discussion about the attitudes of parents, but comparatively little regarding their knowledge (theme 12). The only comment made in this area was from a parent of a child with Down syndrome, who had found the pre-school through the Ministry of Social Affairs. However, she had not been well informed about her child's rights such as the monthly income that was available to her to claim for her child.

4.19.3. Observation from Pre-school Two (PS2):

Observations are an excellent method to observe behaviour and, by extension, to extrapolate the attitudes of those being observed.

When observing the relationship between the teachers and the SEN children (theme 3) I noticed that the teachers were putting considerable effort into the children with disabilities. For example when observing, one teacher appeared to care a great deal about the SEN children in her classroom but did not seem to be able to cope with the presence of two children Down syndrome. The child with Down syndrome paid little attention to pre-school structures or his expected behaviour: he ate lunch early, or wandered around the classroom, when he was not permitted to do so. He was

disrupting the class as a whole and so the teacher lost patience with this situation. Even though this child appeared not to be stressed in the classroom, his influence on the class made the teacher express the view that he probably would be better in a special pre-school. In contrast, some teachers clearly demonstrated that they cared a great deal. Some made an effort to repeatedly encourage the SEN children to play with others, although joint playing was rarely observed.

This had the consequence of creating a healthy and positive staff-child relationship in this pre-school in terms of relationship between SEN children and teachers. However, it should be noted that these observations were only in the classroom/playground context when the children were present.

PS2 provided different levels of facilities for the SEN children and these included larger classrooms, ramps, wide access to toilets, and resource rooms (theme 7). In addition, it was specially built to meet the requirements of SEN children and many positive aspects were found with regards to the learning environment in the pre-school classrooms. For example, the size of class is suitable to allow the children with physical disabilities to move around smoothly.

The SEN children were observed to arrive in pre-school with adult assistance, either a nanny or a parent, with at least partial responsibility for the child's activities. I found that the children all received some degree of special attention from the teachers and the assistant teachers, such as with eating, movement, using available resources, or even with encouragement to play with others.

4.20. Pre-school Three (PS3)

The third case study is a state pre-school (four to six years) located in South Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The pre-school building is purpose-built and is contained within one ground floor level (see Figure 22). The pre-school appeared very clean and well furnished with modern equipment which seemed to be brand new. The pre-school timings were from seven o'clock in the morning to half past one in the afternoon. There were five classes with 140 children and with 10 teachers. This represents a child to staff ratio of 13:1, with mean class sizes of 27. In the pre-school, there are a

total of 18 SEN children (including deafness and blindness), and so SEN children comprised only 12.5% of the total children. There are no costs for any of the parents of children attending this pre-school. Children at this pre-school came from various socio-economic backgrounds.



Figure 22 Pre-school Three building

4.20.1. Questionnaire outcomes from PS3

In PS3, all staff had degree-level qualifications, including teachers and teaching assistant. Although all staff were educated to a high level, the findings show that the training of teachers in the field of special education needs could be improved further in PS3. Only 15% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had training in special educational needs. However, around three quarters of the respondents stated that they had not received any further training at their own pre-school, as is clear in Figure 23.

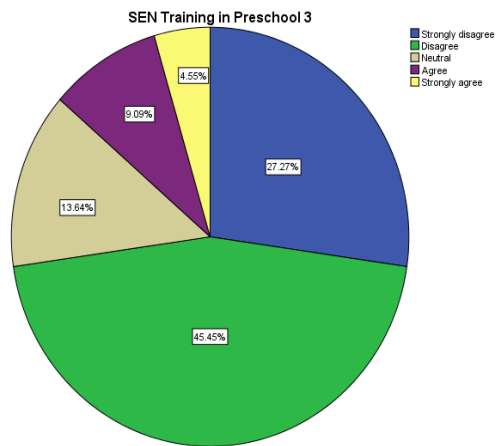


Figure 23: SEN Training in PS3

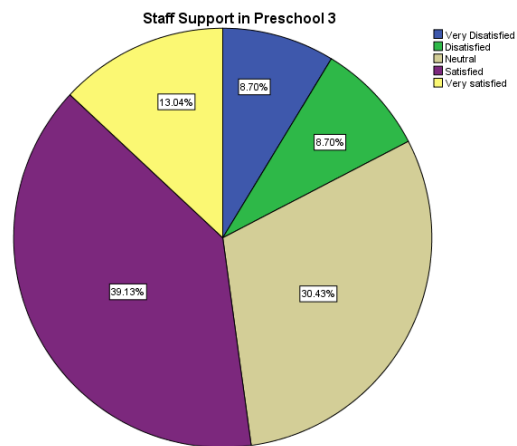


Figure 24: Staff Support in PS3

The answers from the question concerning the support in PS3 reveal that more than half of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the level of support. However, around 30% of the respondents do not show clear statement in terms of level of support. Only 17% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the level of support – see Figure 24.

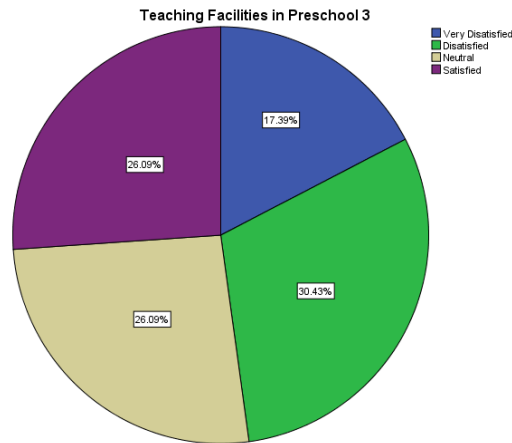


Figure 25: Teaching Facilities in PS3

Figure 25 highlights the fact that more than 26% of respondents are satisfied with the statement that the specialist facilities for SEN children are accessible and available. At the same time, over 48% of the respondents were either dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with equipment in their pre-school. This raises questions of how the teachers can manage with relatively little equipment and very poor facilities, although no specific answer is available from current data.

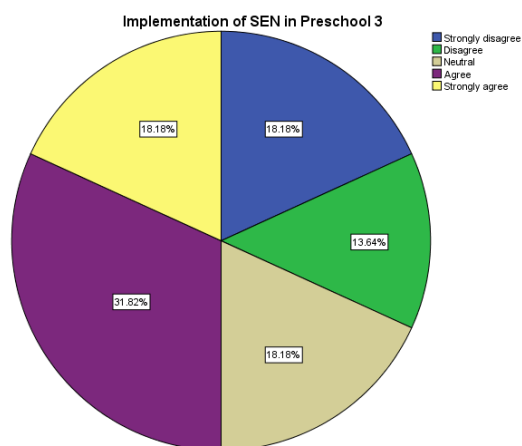


Figure 26: Implementations of SEN in PS3

Figure 26 shows the sample's response towards the implementation of SEN in pre-school three. Overall, it appears that staff are quite well educated in special educational needs, have children with disabilities in their pre-school classrooms, and

are aware of many of the problems associated with the presence of SEN children in pre-school; nevertheless, half of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that there was meaningful implementation of the national policy on inclusion in their pre-state pre-school. However, 18.18% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the previous statement and they declare that there is no implementation of inclusion policy in PS3.

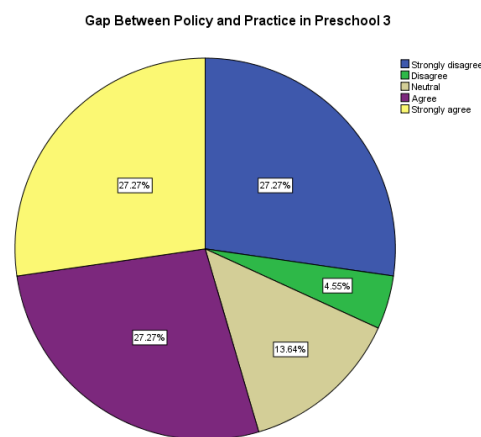


Figure 27: The Gap between Policy and Practice in PS3

Regarding the gap between the policy and practice in the case of this pre-school, it can be seen that around 55% of respondents confirmed that no SEN policy had been implemented well, whereas roughly 32% respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement that there are major gaps between policy and practice implementation with respect to children with disabilities – see Figure 27.

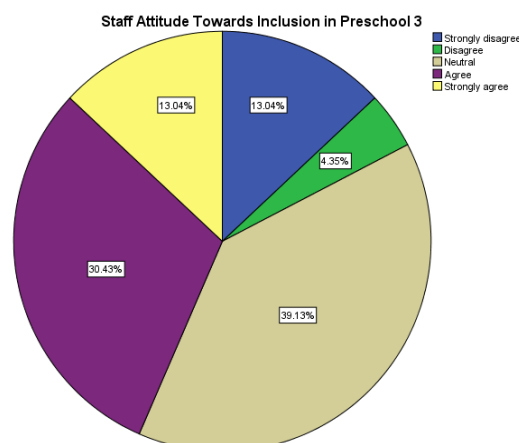


Figure 28: Staff Attitudes toward Inclusion in PS3

In terms of staff attitudes toward inclusion in PS3, it can be seen from Figure 28 that over 43% of teachers had positive attitudes towards inclusion whereas only 17% of teachers either disagreed/strongly disagreed with the idea of inclusion in their pre-school. Approximately 39% were not sure about inclusion. This result can be attributed to the fact that there are insufficient resources and equipment in PS3 to enable teachers to implement inclusion effectively.

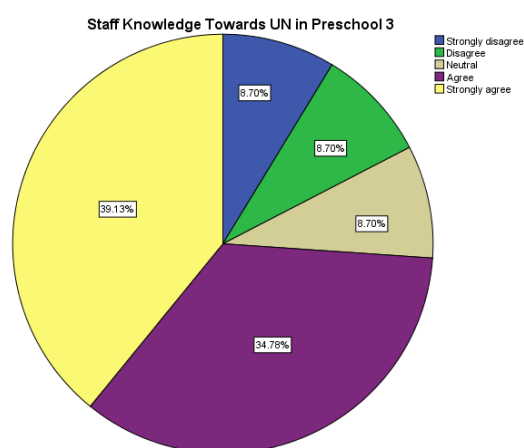


Figure 29: Staff Knowledge of UNCRC in PS3

Teachers' knowledge about the UN Convention in PS3 was sufficiently high as 74% of teachers either agreed/strongly agreed with the statement that they have enough awareness of the UN Convention. However, the participants were aware that the KSA had signed the UN Convention but had limited understanding of the content of the UN Convention. This lack of understanding was also emphasised during the interviews, while around 17% of the participants were totally unaware that the KSA has signed the UN Convention (see Figure 29).

4.20.2. Interview outcomes (PS3):

In PS3, all the interviewees had degree qualifications, including the deputy head, teachers and teaching assistants (theme 1). The issue of staff experience (theme 2)

was discussed in the interviews highlighting the fact that there was some variation in the teachers' experiences. One teacher reported that she had four years of teaching different SEN children, including those with Down syndrome and autism. However, during the year of the study, this teacher's class only had children with blindness and deafness, with the result that the group had been separated into two according to their disabilities, in order to maximise teaching time, efforts and resources.

In PS3, there was extra salary provided for SEN teachers (20%) (theme 5). However, the other members of staff such as teachers stated that they did not receive any additional payments, unlike the SEN teachers, despite having many responsibilities in dealing with the SEN children.

Some teachers reported either not helping or ignoring the SEN children while focusing on the more able. In such cases, there were sometimes failures to meet the individual needs of the SEN children (theme 3).

One classroom teacher said that she does not presently have a teaching assistant as the previous teaching assistant was on maternity leave and had not been replaced. However, the deputy head claimed that each class had two teaching assistants (note that this pre-school has 140 children in only five classes).

In PS3, relationships with parents also appeared to be both negative and positive. One teacher suggested that some parents seek to 'dispose' of their SEN children by finding any pre-school to accept them. The deputy head also claimed to strive to develop and deliver her own staff training sessions in order to aid the continuous professional development of staff. This would be in keeping with the recommendations of experts, like Fleming and Love (2003), who suggest that effective collaboration and positive staff relationships are essential to the school's success and development (ibid.).

Both teachers and parents had attended workshops, which provide the required skills to deal with SEN children, although one teacher suggested the need for improvements in this regard. In addition, one of the parents had attended workshops run by charities, but not workshops run by teachers in their child's pre-school.

In PS3, the deputy head mentioned that although there was a large budget, gaining permission for a particular area was often lengthy and difficult (theme 6). Teachers were set targets and could request resources to assist with SEN teaching. They follow the SEN policy and it was noted that government inspectors visit regularly.

The government allows head teachers to decide about inclusion in state and private pre-schools. This means that the head teacher in this pre-school had decided to become inclusive (theme 5). One classroom teacher discussed the large number of deaf children in her class, particularly as resources had been stolen (theme 7). This teacher also commented on the relative lack of understanding among parents about the services or support that are available. In addition, knowledgeable assistant teachers were also interviewed. One demonstrated awareness of a Saudi policy concerning inclusion, but only those parts of the policy that were being implemented in the pre-school.

In PS3 the deputy head teacher made a number of interesting comments about policy and its implementation (theme 6). She noted,

'Although the written budget for the pre-school is high, obtaining specific funding was a lengthy process. For example; an inspection of the pre-school by two MOE inspectors took place every term. After each visit, the inspectors made suggestions for the improvement of the pre-school and then allocated a rating based on their findings.' PS3D

Concerning pre-school facilities (theme 7), the head teacher mentioned that there had also been a visit by fire safety inspectors, leading to the need for a new building in order to rectify health and safety issues. A teacher at this pre-school talked about the assessment required by the MOE when children enter and leave the school. She also noted that the Ministry had actually removed a resource room for deaf children, although she did not indicate why this had occurred.

The assistant teachers at this pre-school also had views about policy implementation (theme 6). One spoke about the MOE visits during which the teaching had been rated as excellent, but the lack of materials for children had been noted. Although an increase in salary had been requested for all of the pre-school staff involved in inclusion, salary increases had only been given to SEN teachers. Another assistant

teacher said that only parts of the Saudi policy concerning inclusion were being implemented in the school.

In PS3, many staff were displeased with the learning environment (theme 7). One teacher commented about the modification of the pre-school environment to help the SEN children. However, an assistant teacher noted further ways in which the learning environment would be improved by access to better resources. However, the deputy head highlighted that the pre-school's needs were ignored by the MOE even though the head of the pre-school regularly reminded them of their requirements. She also talked about budgeting concerns:

'It takes a long time to get finance from the MOE.' PS3DH

In PS3, the head teacher claimed that she was trying to deliver staff training sessions, because her responsibilities include offering SEN children a place at her pre-school (theme 8). She noted the importance of parents accepting a degree of responsibility for the education of their SEN children. She had taken the responsibility to change the pre-school into an inclusive one and to create provisions for children with disabilities.

In terms of staff responsibilities in this pre-school, the SEN teachers answered questions about their responsibilities. One stated that her responsibility was to implement the lesson plans for deaf children in the classroom, as well as providing one-to-one sessions during corner times. This teacher had contact with all of the deaf children in the class and was paid a higher salary because of this. This SEN teacher also mentioned:

'We have to collaborate closely with resources and lesson plans, and this sometimes could be difficult.' PS3T

This suggests that the individual staff members appear to understand their own responsibilities (theme 8).

In terms of SEN implementation (theme 6) the deputy head was mainly concerned about health and safety and transport. She argued that Saudi policy stipulated that the decision to become inclusive would be left to the head teachers.

She also noted the challenges of special educational needs procedures:

'It's very annoying how much protocol must be put in place to address issues.' PS3DH

One assistant teacher commented regarding her knowledge about both Saudi SEN policy and the UN Convention of Children's Rights (theme 9). She said:

'I am aware of the Saudi policy concerning inclusion but unaware of any UN Convention on children's rights or that the KSA had signed the Convention.' PS3T

The deputy head said she was satisfied with her staff, stating that they are excellent. She noted that the SEN teachers are very well qualified and that even the teaching assistants have backgrounds in working with SEN children (theme 4). She added that the teachers had put their own money into purchasing computers for the use of the children, which demonstrated that while the decision to become an inclusive pre-school had been made by the head teacher, the teachers had fully supported the move (theme 8).

No parents were interviewed from PS3, and there was only one comment concerning parental attitudes. This came from an assistant teacher, who claimed that the parents of children were often anxious to know whether the pre-school accepted children with physical or mental disabilities. She felt that the basis of the enquiry was that these parents would not like their child attending the same pre-school as children with mental disabilities.

One teacher reported that:

'Parents were often unaware that state pre-schools had provision for children with disabilities. For example a family with deaf twins were under the impression that they would have to pay extensive pre-school fees, and who had therefore been very pleased when they did not to have to pay'. PS3T

4.20.3. Observation from PS3:

A notable level of inclusion was found in pre-school three, the site where deaf children were included. As described in the interviews, one teacher had four years' experience of pre-school children with different types of disabilities in an inclusive classroom. Therefore she may have well-developed skills and the fact that I was referred to her class may indicate a good level of expertise. When I observed the class

I saw that the teacher at this pre-school knew how to sign with these children, as did many of the hearing children.

For example Ali is a five-year-old child who has been blind since birth.

Between 7.30 and 9am, I observed Ali in the classroom. I discovered that during circle time he was sitting behind the teacher. He attempted to focus on the story, but this was difficult as the teacher's voice was not loud enough. She asked him one question during this period. When the children began to work individually, the SEN teacher spent time (15 minutes) with Ali, encouraging him to write neatly, while she spend just seven minutes with other children without disabilities.

In PS3, the facilities were generally limited so that additional ones were being put in place, such as extra playground facilities. Very little was provided specifically for the needs of the children with disabilities (theme 7).

During the observations several teachers and assistants were seen attempting to work with the SEN children and trying to include them in the classes with the other children. For example, when the children were asked to put their hands up, an assistant teacher helped one deaf child (theme 8).

Another teacher had learned how to sign in order to communicate properly with a hard-of-hearing child; she played with him when the other children did not. In general, the teachers attempted to include the SEN children in circle time and also spent individual time with these children. However, the focus was sometimes on the more able children.

4.21. Pre-school Four (PS4)

The fourth pre-school was a private school located in West Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The pre-school building was built specifically as a modern school ranging over the ground floor with new facilities and well-equipped resource rooms (Figure 30). The pre-school timings are from seven o'clock in the morning to half past one in the afternoon. It had a total of 12 classes, with 24 staff 270 children. The children were aged between four and six years of age. The majority of classes included around 20

students, with a child to staff ratio of 12:1. The pre-school currently had four children with disabilities (including physical disabilities and autism). The PS4 required triple the normal level of fees for children with disabilities (about £5000 per year). Children at this pre-school came from wealthy economic backgrounds.



Figure 30:Pre-school Four building

4.21.1. Questionnaire outcomes from PS4:

The questionnaire showed different type of responses in terms of staff training. Around half of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they had received training sessions for SEN, and therefore had increased their awareness of how to deal with SEN children. However, roughly 17% of the staff responded strongly that they did not have any type of training, and 11.76% were neutral about attending training workshops for SEN (see Figure 31).

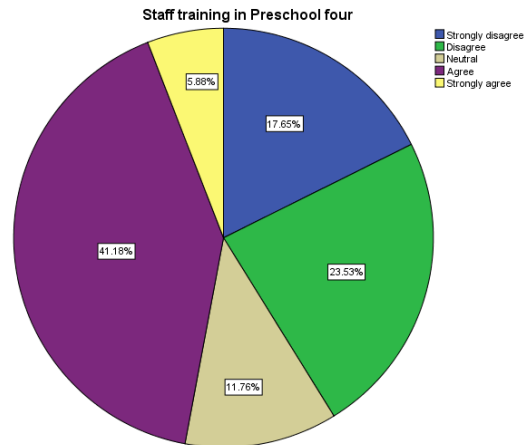


Figure 31: SEN Training in PS4

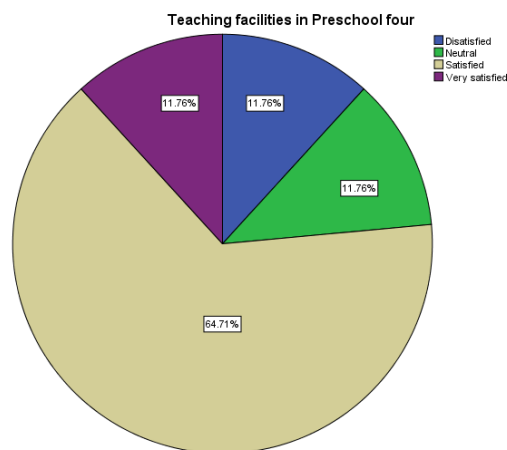


Figure 32: Teaching Facilities in PS4

In terms of teaching facilities it can be clearly seen from Figure 32 that PS4 is very well equipped with excellent facilities. The highest percentage of responses from the participants illustrated that PS4 has enough facilities for SEN children, which provides an effective learning environment; whereas only 11.76% of staff claimed that the existing facilities were insufficient.

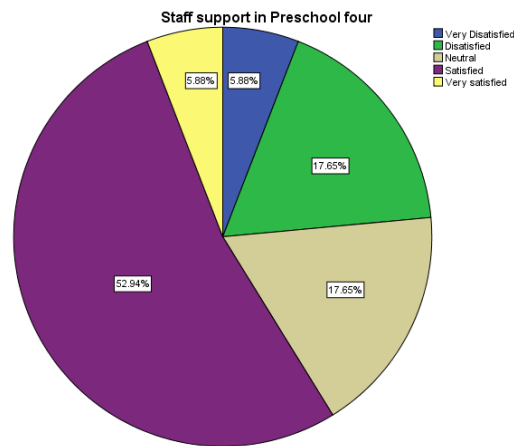


Figure 33: Staff Support in PS4

Over 52% of staff responded that they had enough support from their colleagues. This collaboration between staff members helped them with their duties towards SEN children effectively in terms of providing the effective learning environment. However, a quarter of staff members stated that they did not receive any type of support (see Figure 33).

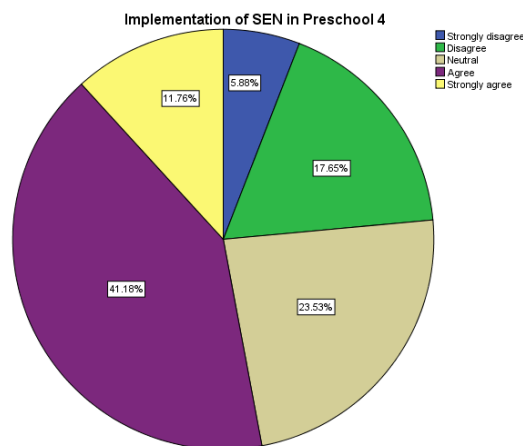


Figure 34: Implementation of SEN Policy in PS4

According to Figure 34, more than half of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that a policy of full implementation was present in their pre-school, which had sufficient facilities and equipment, and an effective learning environment. However, 24% of the participants in the same pre-school were unsure about the level of

implementation so were totally neutral in their responses. Less than 25% of the participants clearly stated there was no implementation of the SEN policy in their pre-school.

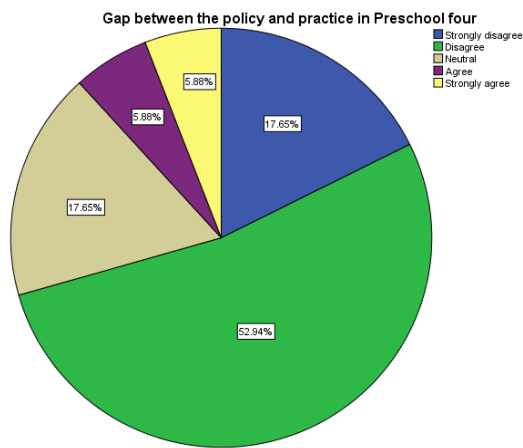


Figure 35: Gap between Policy and Practice in PS4

Approximately half of the participants (52.94%) in PS4 disagreed that there is a gap between SEN policy and practice in pre-school four. They stated that the SEN policy is implemented properly in their pre-school, whereas around 12% of participants confirmed that there is a significant gap between the SEN policy and implementation (see Figure 35).

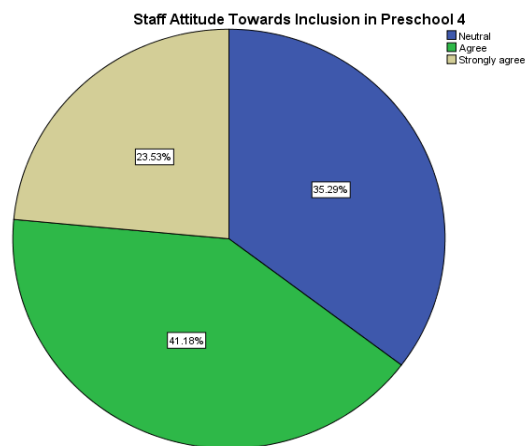


Figure 36: Staff Attitude towards Inclusion in PS4

Figure 36 represents staff attitudes toward inclusion. It can be seen that around three quarters of the participants have a positive attitude towards inclusion, particularly given the fact that their pre-school had all the fundamental requirements to implement inclusion effectively such as facilities, equipment and staff support. Meanwhile, 35% of participants were not sure if their pre-school could adopt inclusion successfully so that they were neutral in their responses.

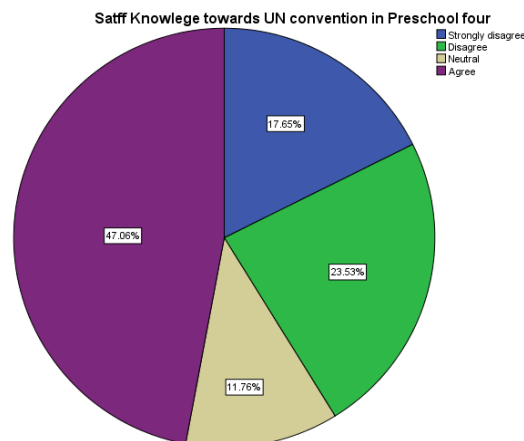


Figure 37: Staff Knowledge of the UNCRC in PS4

Almost half of the participants in PS4 claimed they had enough knowledge of the UN Convention. Around 47% of the staff were aware that Saudi had signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child whereas approximately 40% of them stated that they had insufficient information as to whether Saudi had signed or not (Figure 37).

4.21.2. Interviews' outcomes (PS4)

The head teacher had a '*master in education*', four teachers had a degree in early childhood education, and two of these had a diploma in SEN (theme 1).

In terms of SEN experience (theme 2), the head teacher reported that she had initially been a teacher for five years at the current pre-school, before being promoted to her current position which she had held for a total of 11 years. The deputy head teacher previously worked as a primary teacher for three years and was then promoted to deputy head teacher at the same pre-school.

The interviews from PS4 suggest that a relatively small proportion of the staff interviewed had a clear idea about what SEN experience means (theme 9). The staff with some SEN specialism were aware of what might be considered as good SEN experience, but other teachers were less knowledgeable and consequently less confident in dealing with the children with disabilities.

The staff appeared to be confident and had a good relationship with each other (theme 4). One teacher noted she was very pleased with the amount of support given by the head of the pre-school and enjoyed the high level of collaboration with other teachers, which helped them to improve and more effectively develop the abilities of those children with SEN.

In terms of theme 8, overall, it was evident that the teachers cared about the SEN children for who they were responsible alongside with SEN teacher and that they worked with them to achieve satisfactory progress.

PS4 had a resources room and qualified SEN teachers who set up folders for each SEN child. Each child is seen daily by the SEN teacher and the MOE policy for SEN is followed closely by the SEN inspector. Most of the staff at this pre-school felt that they would be able to accept additional SEN children (theme 6).

In PS4, one teacher said that:

'I follow the MOE policy in regards to SEN and I attend educational and workshops to improve myself and to help my SEN children.' PS4T

However, another teacher at this pre-school mentioned how the pre-school had adapted the MOE curriculum to enable its teachers to teach SEN children during a day. Basic targets in terms of the curriculum had been set for all children, not just SEN children (theme 5).

The situation in PS4 was different from the others with respect to the learning environment (theme 7). In this case, although there were relatively few SEN children, the provision for them was significant. For example, a resource room with an open budget had been created and placed under the supervision of an SEN teacher, with other teachers able to suggest new resources for the pre-school. The staff were all extremely complimentary about the pre-school and its learning environment.

One SEN teacher said that:

'My pre-school is well resourced, so my responsibility is totally involved in teaching special educational needs children. ' PS4T

Even though there were only four SEN children, one SEN teacher had access to the open budget to pay for resources. This enabled her to purchase new toys and tools at least once a month to support the children. It appeared that she was responsible for resources and the resources room for the whole pre-school, and that she did her best to enrich the pre-school environment. In addition, this SEN teacher met each child with a disability, in an individual half hour meeting every day in the resource room, and spent a further hour with them in the classroom (theme 5).

One of the SEN teachers noted the high level of support from the management on the issue of staff training in SEN. One of the classroom teachers was particularly pleased with the pre-school, explicitly noting her admiration for the head teacher and how workshops were provided (theme 3).

Overall, the interviews show that most of the interviewees were knowledgeable about their duties to a satisfactory level. Some respondents demonstrated a clear understanding of government regulations, whereas others provided evidence of their knowledge about the UN in general (theme 9).

Interviews were held with two SEN teachers and one classroom teacher in order to address the staff attitude (theme 10). One SEN teacher was complimentary about the resources and the organisation of the teaching. She stated that she was very pleased and confident about the level of provision for SEN children at her pre-school, adding that the teachers are encouraged to undertake further training in workshops. Individually, she stressed the importance of trying to meet the individual needs of each child by spending time with them and by focusing on their abilities (theme 8). She was also pleased with the parents and collaborated regularly with them. The second SEN teacher was also happy with the resources available but felt the pre-school could accept more SEN children.

The classroom teacher had only one SEN child with physical disability and was in contact with his parents. She attended to him when needed, although she claimed that he needed little extra attention. This teacher said:

'I admired the head teacher for what she was doing for the pre-school and how she supported her staff by providing workshops for all of us and encouraging outstanding teachers.' PS4T

She was also pleased with the facilities and the level of collaboration between teachers (theme 4).

The views of the parents about the performance of staff were also interesting (theme 11). Some parents were pleased with what the pre-school was providing for their SEN children in terms of educational and social perspectives while others felt the pre-school could do more. One mother of a child with physical disability noted that:

'Although we spent a huge amount of money for my son to go to pre-school, we are (me and his father) very pleased that he is happy to go to pre-school.' PS4M

One SEN teacher was complimentary about parental knowledge (theme 12), explaining that the parents of the children she taught generally came from educated backgrounds. This helped her to collaborate with them more easily to gain the best results for their children. This illustrates how, in one pre-school, an educated parent can have unaddressed concerns about her child's education, while another pre-school welcomed parents and addressed their concerns. Some parents had significant concerns, and these could only be addressed through interaction with staff.

4.21.3. Observation from PS4

Observations can reveal a great deal about the learning environment. The observations in this study were directed at individual children, in order to determine the way in which they are affected by their environment.

All pre-schools also had some resources that the children with disabilities were able to use, but PS4 had a well-resourced room that was specifically for the use of SEN children (theme 7). In the same pre-school, it was clear that the teacher kept a careful watch and maintained a file for each SEN child.

I observed children with disabilities, but had a specific focus on children with physical disabilities.

Between 7.30 and 9am, I observed Haifa with physical disability in the classroom. I discovered that during circle time the teacher did not mix her with the other children. Haifa tried her best to take part in the activities that the teacher was talking about (a new Arabic letter). For the first 10 minutes, the teacher focused all her attention on two intelligent girls. When she praised these two girls, the other children seemed to be a bit jealous and they then attempted to get the attention of the teacher. The teacher gave Haifa the letter card and asked her to trace the letter with her finger and state the name of the letter. Haifa replied in a very low voice – the teacher asked her to repeat what she had said in a louder voice. Haifa did what the teacher asked and she was awarded a sticker, just like the other children.

The classroom is large allowing the children in wheelchairs to move around comfortably. There appeared to be various types of facilities and equipment and even preparation, particularly in the science corner. The toilet was inside the class, but it was modified so that children in wheelchairs could use it (theme 7).

During the playtime the SEN children from different classes chose to move to the Lego corner and the teachers helped them move there. The SEN children tried to help each other make something with the Lego, although they mainly played quietly and independently. In the middle of this play time the SEN teacher came to remove one of the SEN children (not Haifa), thus interrupting their play. The other children did not interact at all with the SEN children – it was as if they were in a different environment. Only after 15 minutes of outdoor play time was Haifa encouraged by a teacher to join the children in their play (themes 3 and 8). The children still did not interact with any of the SEN children. Moreover, each class in PS4 had its own facilities and equipment facilitating easy access and reducing the time and effort required by staff to help SEN children. To conclude, it is clear that PS4 is the best-facilitated pre-school, which impacts positively on implementing the SEN strategy (theme 5).

Following the broad discussion provided in the last sections with regard to individual outcomes from the four case studies, the next section discusses the triangulation of the findings from the pre-schools in the context of the research themes.

4.22. Triangulation of findings from case studies

A significant number of the pre-school staff in the pre-schools I visited had academic qualifications; however, these were not necessarily in an area of SEN or in early childhood education. There were large differences between the participating pre-schools in the sample with respect to class size, child to staff ratios, and in the proportion of SEN children. These differences almost certainly had effects on the provision of education for the SEN children.

This contrasts with findings from the data (documentary analysis) in which Saudi policy states that all pre-school teachers should have a formal degree in early childhood or special needs education. One of the potential reasons for this discrepancy might be that some of the teachers had become qualified before the policy came into force in 2006, thus enabling them to maintain their positions despite a lack of relevant qualifications.

The findings from the SEN experience theme also show that the government has implemented training opportunities for pre-school teachers in an attempt to offer them practical experience in special educational needs. However, a large degree of variation was visible amongst those interviewed. The findings from the questionnaires show a particularly wide range of SEN experience among Saudi pre-school teachers. Nevertheless, the average of 9.1 years' experience indicates that Saudi pre-school teachers are not new to special education.

According to the third theme, the relationship between staff and children, the questionnaires showed that teachers were helping children with disabilities in most areas apart from supporting them to use the toilet, which is a task generally done by nannies or maids. The interviews and observations both demonstrated marked differences between pre-schools, which makes it difficult to generalise fairly about staff-child relationships. It appears that relationships depend on the individual teachers and the types of disability. Furthermore, the ratio between staff and children with disabilities was also of major importance. This could be easily explained as being related to the number of children that each member of staff was responsible for, strongly impacting on their workload, which directly affects the time and effort that

can be provided to each individual child. Clearly, the majority of staff were relatively knowledgeable about special educational needs and inclusive teaching, although the level of expertise varies between pre-schools. There was also a reasonable understanding of Saudi policy. In contrast, only very limited knowledge was found regarding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As such, it could be argued that staff knowledge is rather specific and tailored to the requirements of SEN policy, often at the expense of the more general understanding suggested and outlined by international laws, such as UN Conventions.

Overall, the findings showed a great deal of variation in staff attitudes towards SEN children and inclusion. There were definitely some teachers with a more positive attitude than others. Some staff expressed negative views towards the collaboration with parents. Moreover, positive staff relationships incorporating a high level of mutual support appeared to be essential. However, in addition to staff relationships, there were clearly many other human relationships (such as those between parents and staff) that affected the general attitude towards the pre-school and how it functions.

From the observations, a number of parental attitudes and views could be detected. Particularly revealing was that many of the children with disabilities had maids accompanying them to pre-school, which can be argued as indicating that the parents cared about the physical factors relating to their children's attendance at pre-school.

Despite the fact that the government has published information for the parents of SEN children, there is little information being made clearly available to the public. This is especially problematic for parents who lack educational backgrounds to help them in information gathering. Relatively few staff mentioned the existence of workshops for parents and teachers, but for the groups to work together effectively in future, parents clearly must be informed.

Moreover, triangulation of the findings for the theme of staff relationships revealed both positive and negative views about staff relationships. A majority of those interviewed stated general satisfaction with the level of support that they received, although no details were provided about the specific quality and quantity of this support. Triangulation reveals that despite Saudi government policy documents concerning the requirement of SEN strategies.

The majority of questionnaire respondents commented on major gaps between policy and practice, while the remaining noted a failure to implement the Saudi policy on inclusion in their pre-schools. Taken in conjunction with the data from the observations, I conclude that many pre-school children with special educational needs are not experiencing true inclusion. As such, more work is clearly required in order to ensure the successful implementation of SEN strategies.

Although staff generally felt that the level of government policy implementation at their pre-schools was good, the findings indicate several challenges associated with its effectiveness. While the staff sometimes lacked knowledge and awareness about some policies, meaning that they were unable to enact them, in other cases the staff knew about key policies and had concerns about their implementation. Some staff expressed the view that they sometimes felt limited in their ability to fully implement the policies outlined by the MOE. Areas of particular concern among staff were the equipment and facilities required to offer inclusion for SEN children, as well as the difficulties associated with gaining financial support to ensure the provision of these.

Triangulation from the learning environment theme shows the fact that a great deal of funding has been provided by the Saudi government towards the aim of providing good learning environments for the inclusion of SEN pre-school children in mainstream classrooms. What has been done with these funds and how much really has been accomplished to meet the requirements for SEN children are questions that must be answered. Of particular interest and concern is that some pre-schools are very well equipped, while others are severely lacking in even basic facilities.

As could be expected from the interview findings, differences existed between the four pre-schools with regards to their perception of facilities. Staff at PS2 and PS4 responded positively when asked about the facilities available at their pre-schools, while staff at PS1 and PS3 had a negative view.

In conclusion, there are large variations in the learning environments and resources available for children with SEN in the different pre-schools. However, an even greater variation was found in terms of the contributions being made by staff towards utilising the learning environments and resources provided.

In terms of the staff responsibility theme, it is evident that staff carry out a broad range of tasks in relation to children with disabilities and that they know what their duties entail. While differences were found between the pre-schools, it is clear that the budget for SEN staff and facilities plays a significant role in either hindering or encouraging staff responsibilities, although the staff require sufficient knowledge in order to carry out their responsibilities.

According to the staff attitude theme, triangulation for the comparison of documentary analysis with the primary research methods is challenging, as only limited documentation exists on the attitudes of teachers. However, the findings suggest the existence of large gaps between what teachers have expressed in the questionnaire and the degree to which their classroom practice reflects their opinions. These issues are further elaborated in the discussion chapter.

Triangulation reveals that the topic of inclusion is discussed in training for pre-school teachers. The data illustrate that different levels of knowledge exist between the individual teachers with regards to the rights of the child to inclusion. The questionnaires provided more evidence on the level of knowledge about inclusion among this large group of pre-school teachers. While many of the teachers had good knowledge and clear views about inclusion, there was a definite shortage of recent information and training opportunities; these initiatives could have made attempts at inclusion more successful. The observations show that some inclusive practices were being put in place, but that much more could still be done in this area.

In terms of the parent attitude theme, triangulation is not really possible between primary and secondary sources in this phase of the research. Nevertheless, it was surprising to discover that parental attitudes and views did not seem to be taken into consideration during the formal presentation of the education of SEN children.

The concept of parental knowledge may not be addressed fully in even the best educational systems, as parents always wish the best for their own children and are often ignorant of issues involved in teaching whole classes. However, they were aware of some of the deficiencies of the pre-schools that their children attended. The triangulated findings of this study indicate significant differences between what the government thinks it is telling the parents and what the parents actually know.

4.23. Summary of findings

This research yielded a large and detailed dataset. I designed and implemented a range of methods to obtain the findings, which provided a rich body of data and enabled triangulation for accuracy. Some themes were more linked to government documentation than others; other themes were more associated with the opinions of individuals. Overall, I focused on the themes that could best address the research questions; themes addressing what the Saudi government would like to see accomplished as well as the personal views of adults involved in the education of children with special educational needs in Saudi pre-schools. It is clear that it is important to reinforce the point that the pre-schools involved were recommended by the Ministry of Education, and I feel that it is reasonable to expect that the sample should therefore be able to set good standards for Saudi pre-schools overall.

Regarding staff qualifications, the Saudi government acknowledges the importance of effective teacher training. However, the present findings show that this training could be further improved in the special educational needs field, as not all staff had the relevant qualifications. The consequence of this is that some teachers were less confident in dealing with the children with disabilities, highlighting the need for further education and specialist training.

Clearly, policy making is important as it sets the general and specific expectations of government. Questions then arise about who knows about a given policy and what they know. During my examination of the SEN policy, I was able to judge knowledge of policy to some degree through interviews and questionnaires; however, the implementation of policy was best assessed through the actions of individual teachers in the classroom in addition to the observation of the facilities and learning environments in the pre-schools.

Evidently, major gaps exist between policy and its actual implementation with respect to children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. The questionnaires illustrated clear and often pronounced divergences between government policy and SEN strategy in most of the participating pre-schools. As an example of this, despite Saudi government

policy documents requiring formal SEN strategies, some Saudi pre-schools have no published written strategies, nor are they asked to produce them.

Unfortunately, the views of parents of children with disabilities have not been formally considered by the Saudi government; or at least there is no official edict to demonstrate consideration. Consequently, the majority of parents were strongly concerned about the services provided by the pre-schools. This included, but was not limited to, concerns about transportation and access to the facilities. In addition, parents generally felt that their voices were not being heard. Indeed, many parents would like to be more involved than they currently are. This stresses the importance of improving communication between pre-schools and parents, with support being needed for the parents as well as their children.

It should be noted that the data also highlighted marked differences between pre-schools in areas that include staff-child relationships, staff-parent relationships and staff-staff relationships. In particular, large variations were found in terms of the learning environments and the resources available for SEN children in the different pre-schools. However, even greater variation was observed in the level to which the staff utilised the learning environments provided. As such, these issues are difficult to generalise. Rather, these divergent views reflect the fact that the different pre-schools that participated in this study are broadly representative of different pre-school types.

Regardless, SEN policy implementation is clearly a challenging issue for most pre-schools. While teachers may be knowledgeable about policies of inclusion, its practical implementation faces a range of obstacles. However, there was a distinct shortage of recent information and staff training opportunities, which could have made inclusion more successful. The challenges associated with effective implementation of government policies are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The mixture of qualitative data with quantitative data was effective and in compliance with the expectations of social science research. The quantitative data offered statistical evidence on a number of questions; the qualitative data gave clearer and more in-depth insight into the views and value judgments of individuals; and the observations demonstrated the validity of both the quantitative and qualitative

findings. This has hopefully yielded a true picture of the situation facing SEN children in Saudi pre-schools. How this relates back to the literature and to the original research questions is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

Having presented the findings in the previous chapter, I now provide a detailed examination of the ways in which these findings answer the two research questions, highlighting how aspects of the enactment of pre-school inclusion of SEN children are being put into policy and how policy and practice differ. I also explore the key Saudi policies in this area, including their implementation, the obstacles to full implementation, and how these can potentially be overcome. This discussion concentrates on the values involved in disability and inclusion (Arduin, 2015), as they are being demonstrated in Saudi pre-schools. The moral values under examination are those presented by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Saudi policy. In this discussion, I focus on each research question in detail. This is followed by a summary, supported by the policy and practical implications of the findings.

The literature review has clearly illustrated a global drive to include children with disabilities in education, with a visible push to specifically encourage them to be welcomed into pre-schools. One major aim of inclusive education is to develop SEN strategies and facilities that are able to effectively meet their needs. In the Saudi context, this requirement can be derived from the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and Saudi policy. It is therefore understandable that children with disabilities in the KSA might reasonably expect to receive adequate education that fulfils their individual needs. However, the findings here illustrate that the parents of pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA often struggle to find inclusive placements in the educational system. Consequently, many children with disabilities are still encountering barriers to obtaining the standard of education they require in order to flourish. I discuss these issues in further details, based on the four case study schools in the following sections.

5.2. The four case studies: Discussion

The fact that the Saudi government suggested the pre-schools that I intended to visit indicates that these pre-schools were considered to offer good inclusion environments for children with disabilities. I decided to do case studies, as this is a successful social science technique, which can be used to demonstrate the situation in individual settings (Yin, 2014). I also decided to employ multiple techniques (documentations, questionnaires, interviews and observations), as triangulation offers more insight into what is actually happening and where there are discrepancies between what the staff, and parents allege to be the case and what can be observed in practice. Of course, as an outsider observing in a pre-school setting I may be missing some important evidence. What follows are the conclusions for each of the four case studies, using the themes I selected.

5.2.1. Case Study One (PS1)

This private pre-school is large, with a high child-to-staff ratio and a significant number of SEN children. It has staff with good backgrounds in education, but less training in special education. This might be expected in most pre-schools, but it was satisfying to learn that there was special needs expertise available on site. Also present were teaching assistants and maids (although the latter role was usually covered by parents). Staff were generally positive and committed. For SEN children there were teaching plans. However, there was concern about how the pre-school environment was generally unwelcoming to SEN children. Although there was discussion of facilities needed for inclusion (such as transport, toilets, and dining room), and the roles and attitudes of parents, there was less discourse concerning how inclusion could be implemented (for example, I observed that many children with disabilities were largely separate from their peers, and some staff actually ignored the SEN children).

5.2.2. Case Study Two (PS2)

This state-funded pre-school had good facilities, fewer children (but many with special needs), and more teachers. Here collaboration, co-operation, and positive relationships between staff and parents were mentioned. There were one to one sessions available for SEN children, and staff were seen to care for the SEN children. However, at least one parent felt that there were shortcomings in integrating her child with other children, although the staff felt that the Saudi policy towards inclusion was being implemented. Although there were facilities enabling SEN children to attend, staff expressed the view that there was a shortage of specialist equipment such as hearing aids, sensory toys, puzzles and games. This equipment can assist children with disabilities to develop their recognition, sequencing, co-ordination, dexterity and matching skills.

5.2.3. Case Study Three (PS3)

This is a state pre-school being run in a new building. There are relatively few SEN children in the pre-school. The staff felt that there was little specialist equipment for blind and deaf children. Almost 43% of the staff had positive attitudes towards inclusion. There was extra salary provided for SEN teachers, and many of the staff were extremely committed; often putting their own money into buying equipment. It was in this pre-school that the highest level of commitment towards inclusion was observed (a teacher who could sign for deaf children, mainstream children being encouraged to learn sign language, encouraging the mixing of all children). In such a setting deaf children would be able to progress well.

5.2.4. Case Study Four (PS4)

This private pre-school was the largest one I visited, but only had four SEN children. The pre-school building and facilities are good, and there are some specifically for the few SEN children attending. The staff believe that they collaborate and have an effective learning environment. They also believe that the Saudi SEN policy is being

properly implemented (although this must be difficult to measure with so few SEN children).

In this pre-school there was a resources room and specialist SEN teachers available. The teachers cared about the SEN children and there was a comment about the need to achieve satisfactory progress. There was an acknowledgment of the importance of trying to meet the individual needs of each child with disability by spending time with them and focusing on their abilities. However, it has to be said that even in this pre-school the SEN children largely did not interact with the other children.

As a result of using the themes of staff academic background; staff SEN experience; staff/child relationships; the relationships between staff; SEN strategy; SEN policy implementation; learning environment; staff responsibilities; staff knowledge; staff attitudes; parental attitudes and parental knowledge, and then triangulating the findings from questionnaires, interviews and observations in the four pre-schools, significant differences can be found between the pre-schools. For example, the two private pre-schools were very different concerning the number and proportion of SEN children attending. The one with few SEN children (pre-school four) had staff who were more positive about inclusion, including the cooperation and collaboration. It has to some degree reduced the barriers and increased achievements, as suggested by UNICEF (1989).

There were two questions posed in this research:

-To what extent have policies for the inclusion of SEN children been implemented in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia?

-What are the tensions arising from the interaction of Saudi Arabian culture, structure and SEN policy elements?

Based on these research questions, the following sections present and discuss the UN Convention and the current development of the education system in the KSA, with a specific focus on the conceptual findings from the pre-schools sample.

5.3. The rights of children with disabilities

The following section discusses the rights of children with disabilities in accordance with the UN Convention, Shariah law and Saudi policy. These rights are examined in relation to the documentary analysis and from the specific findings of this study.

5.3.1. The UN Convention and the rights of children

According to the UN Convention, Saudi Arabia should provide equal access for all children to education (for details, see Chapter 1). The education system should provide the materials, techniques, communication strategies and support from teachers who are trained in all aspects of education. For children with disabilities, the UN Convention requires education to foster participation, a sense of dignity and self-worth, and the development of the child. Education for all should also be promoted and then monitored through specially tasked government offices and mechanisms.

There should also be the following: no exclusion from the general education system; access to an inclusive, quality and free education; reasonable accommodation provided; support they require; effective individualised support measures in environments that maximise academic and social development; mechanisms enabling the learning of life and social development skills; provision of staff awareness and ability to use appropriate techniques and materials to support children with disabilities. Through the consideration and, wherever possible, the implementation of this extensive list, it should be more achievable to ensure that all children with disabilities are treated as equals and have full human rights in their societies. Nickel (2012) states that these rights are universal and so actions to help children should be mandatory, regardless of the national or cultural norms of a given society. Education is a major aspect of this, and can provide the economic, political and social conditions so that all children can achieve a good life (Fagan, 2005).

5.3.2. Comparing the UN Convention and Shariah Law/Saudi Policy

While it can be questioned whether Shariah law and the UN Convention are compatible, the following section aims to show that their overall aims and strategies are similar. The UN Convention is a much more detailed protocol, prescribing in detail the rights of children with disabilities. Shariah law was conceived 1437 years ago and, as such, does not refer to the same terms and levels of education as exist in modern times (see Appendix 1). However, its strictures nevertheless strongly highlight the principle of equality.

The Saudi government states that its legislation and actions are based on Shariah law, rather than directly on the UN Convention, although it became a signatory to the Convention in 1996. Table 17 outline the values in Shariah law and UN Convention. For further details, please see Chapter one.

Table 17: Outline of the underlying values in Shariah law and the UN Convention

UN Convention	Shariah law
The right of children with disabilities to education.	'Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.' Hadeeth. ([Sunan Ibn Mâjah (224) and others] cited in http://www.islamtoday.com)
Full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth.	The right to education is conferred directly from Allah through the word of the Qur'an, as is the obligation or duty of every individual to educate her or himself as much as possible.
Development by children with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential.	Islam asserts the rights of children with disabilities for education, care and encouragement according to their potential and capacity.
Without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity.	Within Islam, all children must be treated equally, provided care, nourishment and the right to be educated, regardless of class, ability, health, gender or any other factor. (See Appendix one)

Clearly, the needs of children are of utmost importance in both approaches. However, a society is needed that is able to promote important values, such as equality, to pre-school children (Archard, 2004). A social justice approach can provide a methodology to ensure that educational outcomes for children should be valued by both the society and children themselves (Sen, 1999: Nussbaum, 2003).

The UN Convention is extensive, while that which is stated in Shariah law may be less so (for example, the rules of Islam do not deal specifically with the education of

pre-school children with disabilities). Nevertheless, Shariah law has an inherent system of ethics that informs the provision of rights for children with disabilities by the Saudi government. The government has also signed the UN Convention as discussed in chapter one; thus, what has been written and done for children with disabilities in the KSA can be analysed using both the UN documents and those of Saudi policy which was mainly generated from Shariah law. The Saudi government has to consider what is known in the literature as the moral justification and the practical applications of inclusion (Nickel, 2012).

5.4. Current developments in Saudi Policy

The Saudi policy includes the rights of children with disabilities to care, encouragement and education. From the perspective of Saudi Arabia, formalising a policy and providing funds for its implementation was a tacit acknowledgment that children with disabilities exist in the Kingdom and that they are therefore entitled to certain rights in accordance with the law. This was a major step towards changing the attitudes of Saudi society to children with disabilities. The next steps were to determine how the policy was to be implemented and assessed. Al Thani (2007) reviewed the situation for children with disabilities in Islamic Arab countries and found that the implementation of equality is far from done. This research sought to assess this issue with regards to the present situation for a group of pre-school children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Although Saudi Arabia has been providing special needs education for a reasonably long time (e.g., for the blind since the 1960s), it is only relatively recently that the needs of a wider range of disabilities have been addressed (Al-Mousa, 2010). Earlier studies focused on the needs of SEN children, including their socialisation (Al-Mousa, 1999). In the three decades since that time, there have been many changes, one of the most significant of which is the desire for the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education wherever possible. Thus, there were more SEN children in mainstream education by 2008 than there were in special schools (Alquraini and Gut, 2012). This demonstrates an acceptance by the government that all Saudi children have the right to free education. The Document of Rules and

Regulations for Special Education was formalised in 2001 highlighting the categories of disability, diagnosis and assessment, in order to underline their right to have individual education plans, along with the determination of the staff who might be needed to accomplish such a plan (MOE 2016a: 8). Pre-schools are required to raise awareness among families and their local communities, as well as to ensure the provision of SEN teachers. In this sense, it is beneficial to mention that the charities – e.g., Disabled Children’s Association – play a fundamental role in raising the families’ awareness by providing workshops giving information about the nature of the disabilities and how the families cope with it (as discussed in section 1.4.2). Also included are guidelines for how parents are to be involved in the decision-making process. Of course, inclusion has its limits, and in a country with a widespread population such as Saudi Arabia it is often difficult to meet the needs of children with disabilities in both private and state pre-schools. However, the availability of the key requirements – that is, training, specialist equipment and staff – would assist teachers in carrying out SEN Saudi policy implementation.

5.5. Implementation SEN policy

In the implementation of any policy, there are always macro and micro aspects of practice to consider (Ikeda, 2012). The macro denotes the values and institutional norms of society, defining how a policy should be implemented, its compliance ensured and performance tested. The micro level refers to the level of an individual small group (a classroom) or person, their interactions, and interventions involved in assisting an individual (e.g., identification and placement).

The implementation of any policy towards establishing human rights and equality in inclusive education can only be observed in a practical educational context. In the first instance, I found that only some of the pre-school age children with disabilities are being offered education that meets their specific needs. Although little was mentioned about a pre-school-specific SEN policy, the work by some of the staff involves the improvement of inclusive practices in their pre-schools. This result is consistent with Bin Obaid (2009) who also reported on the lack of KSA policy implementation. This rate of implementation appears to be influenced by the absence of guidance,

supervision and delay of financial support. The KSA education system has witnessed a consistent improvement in applying inclusion. However, Maroun et al. (2008) stressed that the impact of any education policy may not become evident until years after its implementation; and it is invariably dependent on other evolving trends and policies. Therefore, Al-Romy (2002) stressed the importance of moving quickly from policy formulation, to adoption, and then to implementation.

Good policy implementation is almost certainly being carried out in some instances: some of the participating pre-school staff stated that they would follow the rules faithfully; others adapt the policy to ensure that children with disabilities receive more attention; and some teachers demonstrate good inclusive practice in their classrooms. This finding is confirmed by Alquraini and Gut (2012), who argued that the current Saudi policy provides a service, so as to better the lives of children with disabilities. However, difficulties with the implementation of policy are frequently mentioned by teachers when they are asked about inclusion (e.g., Nutbrown and Clough, 2006; Andreasson et al., 2013).

My research shows that some pre-schools are welcoming to children with disabilities and provide extra facilities for them. A number of the teachers are welcoming, kind and attentive to the needs of children with disabilities. They also encourage other children to play with children who have disabilities and these factors are supported by numerous studies (e.g., Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Al-Khazamy, 2009) and regarded as being fundamental factors for inclusion to become effective in any education system.

I used both interviews and questionnaires to delve into the knowledge and attitudes of the staff, their relationships and staff/child relationships. The importance of the staff/child relationship has been examined by Abaoud (2016), who also reports that applying peer-tutoring strategies for teaching children with SEN enables children to build social relationships and strengthens the desire among SEN children to work with each other. This is important, if children are going to be able to receive education without discrimination and with equal opportunity, as confirmed in the UN Convention. I noted that there are head teachers who are knowledgeable, mainly positive about inclusion, who support their staff, and who encourage their teams to

deepen their understanding of educational subjects. Many members of staff seem to be aware of the requirements of the Saudi policy regarding inclusive practices. However, this result is not consistent with previous studies. For example, Al Mengash (2006) investigated the implementation of the KSA policy, and found that neither schools nor teachers have been greatly influenced by it, due to a lack of awareness and knowledge among staff members. This resulting difference can be attributed to the fact that, recently, the KSA education system has witnessed a significant improvement in, for example, teacher training courses that increase their knowledge of special educational needs (Aldabas, 2015).

5.6. Gaps between policy and practice

The Saudi government has set out a clear policy based on the UN Convention and Shariah law, both of which note the right to equality, dignity and education for all children. Nickel (2012) states that human rights require continuous justification, adding that there are good practical reasons for bringing about stronger legal requirements and government actions in order to achieve human rights for all children.

There are frequently gaps between policy and practice in many areas. Lyons (2013) presents a good example of this with respect to children with disabilities in New Zealand. Lyons (2013) examined the views of adults who were associated with children with disabilities, based on the suspicion that legislation and policy might be rhetoric, rather than actually transforming the understanding that society has about inclusion. With respect to the goal of inclusive education, there should be explicit commitments to services and programmes in both policy and practice (Fortin, 2009). In Saudi pre-schools, I noted difficulties with regards to the implementation of inclusive education, showing gaps between policy and practice. This was even true in what are otherwise considered to be good examples of inclusion. This result aligns with those of the Nutbrown and Clough (2006) study that also found that it is not easy for practitioners to understand and implement the concept of inclusion, even after they are provided with appropriate tools and comprehensive training packages

In this research, I uncovered significant gaps between the stated goals of the Saudi government concerning the inclusive education of children with disabilities and what can be demonstrated as being available. It is unclear how much progress has been made since Groce (1999) wrote that children with disabilities are often limited by their society, rather than by their disabilities. According to the findings of this study, reducing or increasing the gap between policy and practice depends on many factors. These include facilities, funding, staff attitudes, staff/parents knowledge, staff collaboration, staff training and communication and transparency, all of which are discussed in the following sections.

5.7. The tensions arising from culture and policy

Perhaps a more difficult question to answer is the one involving the tensions arising from policy, structure and culture. The Saudi government has put in place a policy concerning SEN children and inclusion. It is educating pre-school teachers, including disseminating information about special needs. It is also funding the building and staffing of state pre-schools where SEN children can be educated. But the question still remains of whether the pre-schools are doing enough.

Culture plays a large part in the educational process. In Saudi Arabian culture, there are still parents and families who consider that they should hide away any child with disability. Al-Rubiyeh (2010) argues that the KSA culture is one experiencing difficulties in recognising the needs of children with disabilities. Research has shown that social and cultural hindrances, and attitudes, can play an active role in impeding children's access to education (CRIN, 2009). Therefore, what is needed is a change in culture, to ensure the human rights of children with disabilities, something that can be instigated and propagated by the government. In that way inclusion will become more of a reality.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2012) has published online the Index for Inclusion work of Booth and Ainscow (Booth *et al*, 2000; Booth and Ainscow, 2002; Ainscow *et al.*, 2006; Booth, 2011) to help schools and staff work towards inclusion. The criteria include valuing all children; increasing their participation and reducing barriers; restructuring cultures, policies and practices, and viewing

difference in a positive light. Attitudes, values and rights are stressed as being particularly important for the achievement of these criteria.

The right to inclusive education can be justified philosophically using many approaches. Arduin (2015) compares a social democratic attitude to a neoliberal one, comparing Norway and Finland with England and Ireland. She proposes that true changes to educational system only follow changes in the values of a society. For example, in Norway and Finland, the emphasis is on diversity and social collectivism rather than dwelling on terms such as ‘disability’, ‘mainstream’ and ‘placements’. Practice follows on after policy is made, and policy is made after discourse. This is something that the Saudi government might need to consider.

5.8. Communication and transparency

There are questions regarding why the current achievements of the SEN policy are not publicised, as well as questions over why an overall assessment of the progress that has been made towards inclusion in the KSA has not been conducted. Ultimately, this begs investigation of why more progress has not been made.

For instance, with respect to inspections, teachers comment about the separate inspections and inspectors – some for general education, some for special educational needs. They are not always clear about who or what should be followed. According to the MOE (2005), all pre-school provision including both private and state pre-schools must be inspected by an inspector who evaluates the teaching and the provisions and makes certain that these are at an acceptable standard. SEN inspectors are required to focus on children with SEN and the inclusion strategies. Moreover, it is essential to be sure here that each inspector has particular duties in order to avoid the duplication in the instructions as the teachers in my study reported.

It is also unclear why the government does not make pre-school accessible to parents in KSA; Good practice could be acknowledged and rewarded, as seen in Ofsted reports, in the UK (www.Ofsted - GOV.UK). For example, a British website, ‘SEND’, provides a forum for the discussion of funding issues and is regularly updated with relevant news (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/special->

educational-needs-and-disability-send) DfES (2014b). This level of openness would help in demonstrating to a Saudi pre-school how to achieve the required standard, and gaps between policy and practice in individual pre-schools would be made clear. In addition, such reports would help the parents who are experiencing difficulties in finding placements for their children with disabilities. Moreover, parents and families who have SEN children generally require a great deal of support. Some of the parents in pre-schools who I interviewed expressed the view that they had not known where to turn. All children do have the right to education (Archard, 2010) and not to educate them is against their basic human rights. Thus the difficulties experienced by parents in Saudi Arabia cannot be justified.

5.9. Funding

The government of Saudi Arabia has made significant funding (around £20 billion in 2015) available for schools in general, as well as for pre-schools, to enable them to accommodate children with SEN (MOF, 2015). However, the level of government funding is almost always an issue with respect to education. According to Humaid (2009), we should be looking for equity, not equality, when discussing support and funding for SEN children. Fairness in support and resources means that additional funding is needed for the education of SEN children. A number of comments were made, with regards to funding for development of pre-school staff with expertise in special educational needs. They also underlined the importance of sufficient facilities and resources to assist with the education of SEN children. A high level of funding is presently being provided for resource rooms, and SEN teachers (20% in state pre-schools). Certain questions, such as why there are such difficulties adjusting facilities for children with disabilities, were asked several times.

The additional funding provided by the Saudi government ought to promote more attention for children with disabilities. Whether this is happening universally across the KSA seems doubtful: although I observed high levels of inclusive activities in two of the participating Saudi pre-schools, this was not the case in the other two pre-schools. It is important to note that one of the pre-schools with positive inclusive practices is public, whilst the other is private; potentially indicating that government

funding only is not making a large difference. Instead, the success of a pre-school may depend on the attitude and knowledge of the head of the pre-school, and/or its team.

Pre-schools are invited to apply for funding from the Saudi government. However, an issue concerning funding is the length of time and amount of bureaucracy involved in gaining funding for necessary facilities and resources. For example, the findings of my study highlighted that there are delayed responses from the MOE during the application process for state pre-schools to request additional funding. If pre-schools are not able to gain funding easily, it is difficult to narrow gaps between policy and practice.

5.10. Staff training

Many researchers have addressed the need for the increased levels of training for school staff around issues of disability, special educational needs and inclusion, if inclusion is going to work well. Fortin (2009) discusses the need for values, principles and practices to provide a meaningful, effective and high-quality education for children with disabilities, and encourages changes in the system, one example of which is improved professional training.

One of the main aspects of recent Saudi policy I discovered was that teacher education: pre-school teacher training, and degree courses for special education specialists. Equipping staff to teach in inclusive pre-schools can help alleviate some of their fears concerning inclusion. Teachers' and trainee teachers' worries about inclusion have been noted by other researchers (e.g. Nutbrown and Clough, 2004, in European countries; Davies et al., 2009 in the UK; Savolainen, 2011 in Finland and South Africa).

The government could do much more in this regard: they could provide workshops and seminars at nearby universities or in pre-schools, increasing staff awareness, or the exchange of ideas; or publish government websites to assist staff in the daily implementation of the special educational needs policy. EADSNE (2010) describes

how inclusive education and support for teachers can even differ between European countries.

With respect to staff, a recurring issue concerned the question of why some staff are not well trained in the delivery of inclusive programmes. The training of teachers is stressed in almost every published study on inclusive education (e.g., Mukherjee et al., 2000; Al-Gain and Abdulwahab, 2002; Glazzard, 2011). Additional evidence of the need for training with regards to special education needs was provided by Davies et al. (2009), who claim that many trainee teachers have large gaps in their knowledge about how best to implement equal opportunities for SEN children. The importance of training was also confirmed in the KSA context. For example, Al Thani (2007) argues that for inclusive education to be implemented effectively in the KSA, policy changes should be accompanied by changes in the training of pre-school practitioners. The changes in teacher training could then directly impact on experience of children in the pre-school classroom. Also, Aldabas (2015) suggests that training is an important tool to improve the quality of education. The KSA pre-schools are used to team teaching, including teachers with supplementary training in special education, so that teachers are able to collaborate and gain knowledge from each other, which can lead to improvements in the quality of education.

Pre-school teachers who are having difficulties of dealing with SEN children or who suspect that the children have SEN can either refer parents to experts, or attempt to use known strategies to support a child's development themselves (Kevser, 2012). The ability and confidence of teachers to use what they know depends upon their education in theory and practice. Some teachers in the pre-schools that I visited in this study have less positive attitude towards inclusion about where they could go to get This may have adversely affected the attitudes of some teachers towards inclusive education. These observations also raise questions of why some children with disabilities are being largely ignored in their inclusive mainstream classrooms. Their level of participation in some classrooms is extremely low – the children with disabilities are not being encouraged to participate and it was observed that the children were not inclusive in their play.

5.11. Facilities

I noted substantial differences between the pre-schools that I visited with regards to the number of children with disabilities that they were teaching, as well as the facilities provided for them. The interviewees and questionnaire respondents indicated a broad level of satisfaction with the staff available, although they claimed to be less pleased with the standard of equipment and transport, and expressed general dissatisfaction with the facilities. As mentioned previously, the concern is not only the presence of specialist facilities and equipment, but also the ability and willingness of staff to use them. Some interviewees mentioned that specialist equipment and workshops exist.

D'Alessio (2012) studied inclusion in Italian schools and found that space does matter. Two of the pre-schools that I worked with in this study had made good provision for children with disabilities, but others had difficulties to do so. There are also large differences in the numbers of children with disabilities attending the different pre-schools. Some reasons for this that were given include the efforts required to assess and provide enough facilities for SEN children. However, as the participating pre-schools were the ones recommended by the government, I expected to find more children with disabilities in these classrooms. Unfortunately, it is reasonable to expect that one might find even fewer children with disabilities in many other pre-schools in Saudi Arabia, which suggests that the policy on inclusion is less advanced at this time than might be expected.

In 2010, a government report was published, stating that children with ADHD are to be accommodated in Saudi schools (MOE, 2010). However, the parents of ADHD children have been reported as finding it very difficult to find placements. This has resulted in them complaining to the government about the lack of inclusive education available for their children (MOE, 2015b). Indeed, the findings here highlight that simply finding a suitable pre-school can pose a major challenge for many parents of children with disabilities, because there are not enough pre-schools available, which is compounded by a lack of information from the MOE about how to find them. This finding contrasts with published Saudi Policy (1991), which highlights the need to

provide access to early years' education for every child and raises awareness and motivation of parents with respect to pre-schools and early-learning opportunities.

It is interesting to consider the extent to which more children with disabilities could be accommodated in pre-schools if the facilities were adequate. In the sample in this study, two pre-schools were found to be much better facilitated than the others. In the former, the pre-schools had been specifically constructed to meet the needs of children with disabilities (with considerations such as easy access, resource rooms, or improved toileting facilities). In contrast, the lack of these kinds of vital facilities in the remaining two pre-schools makes successful inclusive education much more challenging. In particular, the importance of providing enough facilities has been confirmed by Mouter (2013) who found that a lack of facilities was the main reason behind students with physical disabilities discontinuing their education at public schools in Riyadh, in the KSA.

The KSA invested £380 million in 2012 in supporting individuals with special educational needs across the country; 25% of this budget was used in the development of the services and facilities provided to SEN children in schools (MOF, 2012). However, my findings have shown the challenges associated with limitations in pre-schools' facilities and access. This lack of facilities can contribute to a delay in the response from the MOE when the pre-schools apply for funding.

The results from Grisham-Brown et al. (2009) suggest that embedding intensive instruction for children with disabilities during normal daily activities is both effective and efficient, as young children learn so very quickly. The provision of these kinds of facilities and individual dedication to using them more effectively and more frequently at all schools might enable and assist real inclusion. A focus on meeting the educational needs of children with a range of SEN in the KSA has also managed to increase knowledge regarding specialised programmes for children whose educational, social, emotional and behavioural needs are not being met by the standard national curriculum alone (Al-Mousa, 2010).

5.12. Staff collaboration and relationship

One of the most significant results in this study is the collaboration between teachers and, even more so, between teachers and parents. This result aligns with the studies conducted in the KSA. For example, Al-Othman (2014) reports that the quality of education can be improved by collaboration between the parents of SEN children and teachers. This collaboration could include inviting the parents of SEN children to attend regular meetings with the teacher, and providing training courses and advisory services.

This finding, however, is not consistent with the previous studies conducted in other Arabic countries (e.g., Bataineh and Alsagheer, 2012) where teachers have noted a lack of social support from supervisors, colleagues, friends, spouse and family. This has been cited as a reason for increased incidence of teacher burnout. In my research, I did find some outstanding examples of collaboration between a teacher and parents; for example, teachers helping parents to increase their abilities to assist SEN children who require more time and effort with their work outside of pre-school by providing workshops. However, a few parents were not attending meetings with teachers and professionals to decide how best to help their children with disabilities, but this seems to be an exception rather than the rule.

This suggests that a considerable gap currently exists between what inclusion could be and the way in which it is being practiced in the Saudi pre-schools that I visited. There are both macro (e.g., government training) and micro (e.g., staff and parental attitudes) reasons for this. My research was intended to find effective practice where it exists and thus provide models for other pre-schools. The following section outlines the attitudes towards inclusion for pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA.

5.13. Attitudes towards inclusion

As the findings have shown, there is a need to improve attitudes both of the parents as well as of staff. Arduin (2015) discusses how a society has to change for inclusive education to be successful. A report for the UK charity SCOPE shows there is still

much to be done even in the UK with regards to changing attitudes towards individuals with disabilities (Aiden and McCarthy, 2014).

The findings of this study suggest that the staff are an essential means by which inclusion can or cannot be practiced in the classroom. Nutbrown and Clough (2004) for example, surveyed pre-school staff in four European countries (Denmark, Greece, Italy and the UK) about their attitudes towards inclusion. They confirm that the educators have a positive attitude towards inclusion. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) stress that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical in ensuring the success of inclusive practices since teachers' acceptance of a policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it.

Work should be undertaken to inform the public about any changes being brought about within Saudi policy and the UN Convention and that are being promoted by the government. In addition, attempts should be made to improve public knowledge about UNCRC and the CRPD, something that is currently lacking. Teachers should be informed that any negative attitudes towards children with physical or mental disabilities are in contravention of both the UN Convention and Saudi policy, which should hopefully encourage them to change their perspective and attitudes.

The findings of this study suggest that the majority of the staff have a positive attitude towards inclusion and having children with disabilities in their classrooms. These attitudes of pre-school staff may be linked to some degree to the knowledge that individual teachers have (e.g., Nutbrown and Clough, 2004; Glazzard, 2011; Savolainen, 2011; Hudaithi, 2015) .

5.14. Staff /parents' knowledge towards inclusion

One of my major findings concerned the ways in which Saudi teachers could gain knowledge about disability and inclusion. As universities now have more qualified staff who are better able to teach about SEN children than before, special educational needs and inclusion are now on the teacher-training syllabus in the universities as discussed on finding chapter (4.3.1). Because of this, all prospective teachers are

required to learn about these subjects. There are also modules available for teachers hoping to specialise in special educational needs and learning difficulties. These changes may be seen as part of a major movement from special schools towards the wide-scale implementation of inclusive practice, as recommended by the UNCRC, CRPD and KSA policy.

The findings from teacher interviews and questionnaires in my study have confirmed that many teachers are aware of the Saudi policy concerning special educational needs and inclusion, as well as having good knowledge about KSA policy. This knowledge has been gained and developed through training sessions (Al-Othman, 2014). In terms of the UNCRC and CRPD, it is essential to mention here that most of the participants know that Saudi Arabia signed the UN Convention. However, there remains a relative lack of knowledge about what the UNCRC and CRPD entails. Nevertheless, it is important that a large proportion of the teachers know that such a policy exists, as well as some of its details, as this suggests that the government is clearly communicating their expectations to the pre-schools' teachers. In this regard, Al-quraini (2011) argues that if pre-school teachers in the KSA are sufficiently aware and have enough knowledge about the policies, the next step is to determine how willing they are to implement them.

As for formal academic qualifications, although a large number of staff had academic teaching qualifications, a smaller proportion had some training in special educational needs. This supplementary knowledge has either been acquired during their initial teacher training or while in service. This result contradicts the findings of the documentary analysis concerning training in special educational needs.

In terms of parent knowledge, parental lack of knowledge or criticisms of inclusion have been well documented for a long period of time, and the recent publication by Norwich and Eaton (2014) aims to allay the fears of UK parents of children with disabilities who sense that they may not have a voice in their children's education. As noted previously in the work of Haussler and Kurtz-Costes (1998), parents often find it difficult to discover the options open to them, have had little communication with the schools (Janus et al., 2008), and have reported difficulties when dealing with teaching professionals (Lees et al., 2009). While these reports did not gather data from

Saudi pre-schools, they still point to a gulf between policy and practice with respect to the assistance given to parents and families of children with disabilities in general. I investigated the themes involving parents' knowledge through interviews. The findings of this study show that it is less clear how parents are able to find or effectively access information about inclusive pre-schools. The current research study found that while some parents are satisfied with what has been offered for their children, discovering what is available was not easy.

5.15. Practice

The findings of this research indicate that while good practice does exist to some extent in Saudi pre-schools with respect to inclusion and children with disabilities, this does not apply to all pre-schools. Nevertheless, I observed the inclusion of many children with disabilities in pre-schools, although there is scope for improvement. In the majority of instances, I observed a reasonable level of accommodation and support, in addition to limited measures available for the promotion of academic and social development. This included staff who are able to effectively support the children with disabilities.

Evidently, there is a need to improve teacher training as well as practice. The report for UNICEF by Rieser (2013) highlights the fact that the improvement of education of teachers with regards to children with disabilities is an issue that should be focused on in many countries. With respect to the research reported here for Saudi Arabia, a country with a unified education system, change could easily be implemented if certain rules are followed. This can be achieved through a number of measures, such as by ensuring that the higher education curricula extensively incorporate the study of inclusive practice and that this becomes a requisite for teachers to qualify. For practicing teachers, there should also be easier access to help in the implementation of inclusive practice, thereby fostering more positive attitudes towards inclusion among existing staff. This study found that the government can provide training, specialist equipment to assist teachers in carrying out inclusive practices as also recommended by Al-Othman (2014) in order to provide a good quality practice. The importance of policy implementation for schools should be highlighted to increase teacher

awareness. Finally, all teachers should be provided with sufficient time and encouragement to generate and strengthen qualities, such as respect for human rights for all their children.

The findings highlight a lack of available inclusive pre-schools. As such, policies can be implemented to at least partially alleviate these shortcomings. More inclusive pre-schools should be established throughout the Kingdom, and efforts should be made to develop outreach programmes for remote or outlying districts through visits, workshops and teacher exchanges. Success in the implementation of inclusive practices can be ensured using frequent inspections and by making the information about inclusion in pre-schools available to the public, noting locations where excellence is found.

5.16. Summary

In brief, in this chapter I have highlighted a broad range of gaps between policy and practice. In addition, a number of suggestions have been made with regards to ways in which these gaps might be narrowed. These could facilitate the inclusion of pre-school children with disabilities in the KSA, enabling their education to be more positive and successful.

A gulf still exists between the policies of inclusion (whether these stem from the UN Convention or from Saudi policy) and the practices intended to put these policies into practice. The reality is that the present situation does not reflect a great deal of success with respect to the inclusion of children with disabilities into Saudi pre-schools. The findings of this study suggest the need for more openness, transparency and collaboration; supported by the education of parents, school staff regarding disability, inclusion, and special educational needs. Moreover, improvements in communication between the government and all partners involved in the development and education of children could be achieved simply through acknowledgement by the government of the usefulness of such actions.

Other areas of concern, such as the need for improved teacher training, require a much greater investment in time and money into inclusive education. Change is always

difficult and in Saudi Arabia much change must necessarily come from rulings set by the central government. By addressing principles such as human rights (Tikly and Barrett, 2011) and social justice and capacity building (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003) for all children regardless of their ability, the government can institute change through active policies and practices. A commitment by the government to improve conditions for inclusion in Saudi pre-schools, through the use of multiple instruments, could yield far-reaching and extremely positive consequences. I believe that these kinds of investments would provide an avenue to improve the general attitudes of all Saudi citizens towards the creation of a more caring society.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to analyse the educational opportunities for pre-school children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, with the intention to make suggestions for improvements to the *status quo*. Driven by personal and professional motivations, I wished to discover how the inclusion of SEN children into mainstream education is operating and the possible ways in which it could be made better.

In the first instance, I examined Saudi government policy and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning children with disabilities. I have discovered that Saudi policy as written complies with both Shariah law and the UN Convention in terms of the moral attitudes towards all children and their right to an education.

A comparison was then made between Saudi policy and what could be considered as ‘practice’. This was accomplished through the use of questionnaires, interviews and observations. The pre-schools visited were those recommended by the government as those that practice inclusion. Each of these divergent pre-schools was assessed, so that a range of perspectives could be examined.

One has to consider why the particular pre-schools act the way they do. Although I did observe some examples of good inclusive practice, there nevertheless appears to be much lacking in the practice of some of the participating pre-schools. On the whole, the interviews with staff in these pre-schools reflected the levels of inclusive practice observed, offering validity to my findings. I can therefore conclude that the results of this study reflect the reality of the situation to a large degree.

6.2. Human rights and inclusion

This research was based on the UNCRC, CRPD and Saudi policy, human rights and more specifically the rights of children with disabilities. Nickel (2012) defends these rights, both morally and politically, stating that actions to uphold these rights should be mandatory. Minimum standards should be set, with individuals being given the

right to judge and challenge how effective government actions have been (ibid.). Although children may have different needs and rights than adults, adults should act in the best interest of the children in their care (Archard, 2010), and education today should be addressed from a children's rights' viewpoint (Bergstrom, 2010). With respect to the education of children with disabilities, the human rights approach (Tikly and Barrett, 2011) could be complimented by the application of a social justice and capabilities approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2003) to help ensure that these children develop to their full potential.

The majority of the staff who participated in the study seemed to know that Saudi Arabia has signed the UN Convention. However, there is a lack of detailed understanding of the UN Convention of Human Rights in terms of what it entails. The reason for this lack of awareness and knowledge is almost certainly because there has been no effort to provide any education on these issues. In turn, this lack of knowledge affects the implementation of human rights in regard to inclusion. This provides a starting point to recognise that every child should be treated equally and that differences are an essential element of their equal value as human beings. In terms of equality, this implies that needs should be recognised and that every effort should be made to meet them. Specific programmes to meet those needs are a logical and necessary step in the design and implementation of policies and programmes for inclusion. It can be argued that this understanding needs to be supplemented with the kind of outline of human rights provided by the UN Convention. Although Islam offers a general discussion about equality and equity (see Appendix 1), there are relatively few examples; so improved comprehension of the recommendations of the UN Convention could complement inclusive practices. This underlines the evident need for better education and communication from school age onwards.

International organisations have already highlighted the above issues, such as in the UNICEF Report on Teacher Education For Inclusion (2013). This Report acknowledges that there is still much resistance to inclusion, and inclusive education for most children with disabilities remains elusive. As a consequence, they suggest that in many instances there has been a shift from a medical model of disability to a social/human rights one (ibid.). However, in order for children with disabilities to claim their rights and participate fully in education systems, there need to be extensive

changes to the conceptual underpinnings, application, context, and focus of the education system. The structures, organisations, learning, curriculum and assessment also must change. Thus the new paradigm is that *'all children should have access to education and children learn best when learning together, recognising diversity'*. The UNICEF report recommends a twin-track approach to the changes – changes to the systems and organisations as a whole and changes to the specifics of how to include and educate children with disabilities (ibid.).

In many instances, children with disabilities are subject to unfair and unequal treatment, being hidden or put into institutions, or are subject to stigma and discrimination even in mainstream education (Tran, 2013). The KSA has come a long way; however many children with disabilities in the kingdom are still less visible and remain stigmatised in society (Al Quarini, 2007). The findings of this study show that despite the considerable efforts by policy makers and pre-school staff to rectify this situation, extensive work remains to be done to enable children with disabilities to experience true inclusion in accordance with their human rights.

6.3. Implications of this research for policy making

Parsons (2002) has written about how social sciences can be used to improve policy making, so that it becomes more evidence-based, to find the high ground behind a policy, to map it out and to occupy it. According to this position, policy should be supported with academic research, in conjunction with professional experience. For example, the policy of inclusion and its optimal implementation can be considered using evidence-based techniques. High-quality quantitative research-based evidence has been shown to impact positively on policy making (Wiseman, 2010).

In recent years, much has been done to improve inclusion of Saudi Arabian children with disabilities in the educational system. However, the findings of my study clearly illustrate the existence of a gap between policy and practice, with a number of attendant obstacles that need to be overcome. As such, there is a wide array of policy implications to be drawn.

6.4. Recommendations for the stakeholders

This study provides a range of recommendations for stakeholders comprising the parents of SEN children, staff and MOE as follow:

1. The MOE should establish special education programmes and curricula in Saudi universities to improve the design and delivery of preparation programmes for SEN teachers, which this study found were shown to be lacking. In the long run, this would enhance the learning and achievement of SEN children.
2. The parents of SEN children should collaborate effectively with the staff in order to achieve successful education of children with disabilities. The findings here highlight a generally positive attitude towards such collaboration, but a failure to fully implement such action. If teachers and parents worked together more closely, this would further facilitate the learning processes of children.
3. The MOE should establish a system that allows staff and parents to meet regularly to discuss their children's progress and whether they are meeting their targets for achievement, which is determined by the MOE. In like manner, parents need to be given appropriate information about ways to collaborate with their SEN children at home so that they can support their learning in the pre-school.
4. The MOE should increase the number of inclusive pre-schools and facilities so that all children with disabilities have easy geographical access to a nearby location. At the very least, an efficient transportation system needs to be established to allow children with disabilities to more easily reach their pre-schools. The findings of this study indicate that access can pose a significant challenge for parents and children with disabilities.
5. The MOE should create a national awareness programme to encourage more positive attitudes towards children with disabilities. This should foster better communication, through the provision of information about disabilities, and what causes them. For example, with the involvement of pre-school staff and the parents of children with disabilities, this could take the form of workshops and participatory events. This may help to improve the perception of children with disabilities in the

KSA, showing that they can become a valuable part of society if they are provided with a proper education.

6. The MOE should provide a variety of services for SEN teachers, such as internships, job placements and workshops focusing on specific issues. This kind of addition to the current educational system would be likely to help to produce teachers with more awareness and wider knowledge, as well as the particular skills needed to excel in their roles. This would in turn improve the quality of education for children with disabilities in the KSA.

As discussed in section 1.9, in relation to the staff as stakeholders with respect to collaboration in inclusive education, Dieker (2013) describes co-adult teaching teams working with groups of heterogeneous learners as a good example. Wilson and Bedford (2008) further highlight the importance of close partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants, involving performance management and training for partnership.

From the perspective of inclusive practice, the pre-school teachers in Sweden have themselves noted the importance of having staff members in every pre-school with adequate, specific knowledge (Sandberg and Ottosson, 2010). Helping pre-school teachers to develop quality staff-child relationships is vital for the promotion of greater engagement, but also for improving the self-worth of pre-school children with disabilities (Searle et al., 2013).

6.5. Limitations of the study

As with all studies, there are various limitations to this research. One major limitation is that only four pre-schools were visited. While each of these pre-schools was assessed, in a case study manner, this took a substantial amount of time. Nevertheless, the research would have been enriched and perhaps become more generalisable if a larger number of pre-schools could have been included. Furthermore, because of the ongoing development of the educational needs services it may be challenging to extrapolate many of the findings of today into the future, as the current situation may change.

On the one hand, the findings of this study can be criticised as they focus primarily on pre-schools in urban areas. Ideally, I would have liked to have investigated additional pre-schools in more rural areas, as these could have complemented those participating in the urban areas. Although such research was beyond the scope of my doctoral study, I believe that this may have offered insights into important differences in terms of general social and economic attitudes and as such, in terms of approaches to inclusion as well. On the other hand, I made a considerable effort to utilise a sample that represents a variety of different social demographics and different approaches to inclusion (i.e. private vs. state pre-schools) so that a wide array of perspectives could be covered in my study.

A large representative sample, however, is not required for the particular research perspective of this study. With the case study approach, I achieved a relatively in-depth understanding of the particular cases selected, thereby acquiring a range of implications and recommendations for the Saudi Arabian government, as outlined in the previous section.

Additionally, it would have been beneficial to interview children with disabilities. With the full agreement of the teachers and pre-school heads, I sent consent forms for parents in children's backpacks. Unfortunately, there was no response from parents.

6.6. Avenues for further research

To date, only a limited body of academic research is available on the inclusion of children with disabilities in the KSA. Much of the literature is 'grey literature' such as government reports. However, more and better research is likely to aid the development of more inclusive strategies and practices. Consequently, it may be beneficial to establish and support more research centres for the study of inclusion in Saudi pre-schools; to ensure that all relevant information (including research findings) not written in Arabic is translated; and to set a good example for other Muslim/Arabic countries to follow.

Furthermore, there is a lack of longitudinal research, which would be greatly beneficial in order to chart the development of children with disabilities. Likewise,

there is a clear need for more in-depth qualitative studies, including for example observations, as so far the majority of the research conducted in the KSA has been of a quantitative nature (e.g., Samadi and Marwa, 1991; Alkhshrami, 2004). As this exploratory study has indicated, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches and utilising triangulation can be effective in obtaining a fuller picture of the situation under study. By giving a voice to those responsible for children with disabilities, I endeavoured to ensure their right to be heard and that their perspectives are covered.

There is a great deal of future research to be done with respect to the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream pre-schools not just in Saudi Arabia but also globally. Certainly, more work needs to be done on public attitudes and how these can be adjusted. Wider observations of the present operations of pre-schools should also be done, in order to determine how this can be improved. Of special interest is to determine what successes there have been as children with disabilities move into early years' education. Success with respect to educational progress, positive attitudes and self-confidence for all SEN children in Saudi pre-schools should be studied in detail, then comprehensively assessed, and then promoted in Saudi society to enable true inclusion to happen.

6.7. Final summary

There are both moral and legal reasons for striving to improve the education of pre-school children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia, not least of which is because societal values should comprise the basis of the education system of all countries Saudi Arabia, which is governed under Shariah law, can find many references to equality and equity in the Islamic faith. This stance must necessarily have an impact on educational discourse, policy and practice. Vandermoortele (2012) advocates an equity-mediated approach to development, ensuring that all children receive education in his paper 'Equity begins with children', predicated upon the position that educating children to accept difference can only improve a society. If there is to be a shift towards more egalitarian, inclusive practices in Saudi pre-schools, there will certainly need to be societal changes in attitudes, beliefs and assumptions about disability,

diversity and difference. The children educated in successful inclusive classrooms will, as adults, be ready and able to change their society. Arduin (2015) writes that

'Assessing the influence of societal values on the design of an education its system, and its approach to special education, may clarify the barriers to, and changes required for, the implementation of an inclusive education system' (Arduin, 2015, p.107).

This research has produced some important information about the ways in which pre-school children with disabilities are being educated in Saudi Arabia. It has also highlighted key barriers to improving their education and suggested solutions to remove or mitigate the influence of these obstacles. There are many countries which are experiencing problems in adjusting their education systems so that the SEN children can reach their full potential.

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Appendix 1

Children's rights in Islam

Traditionally, in Saudi Arabia there was little emphasis on education and therefore great discrimination existed between the sexes (Manna, 2006). However, through Shariah law, Islam has promoted gender equality and encourages raising all children generously and fairly (Al-Otaibi, 2008). Rajabi-Ardeshiri (2009) states that most Islamic countries claim to be implementing laws based on a framework of children's rights alongside Shariah law and the UN declaration on the Rights of the Child. Nevertheless, discontinuities between law and the reality can exist.

Since the inception of Islam, human rights and care for the child have been held in high esteem under Shariah law (Roberts, 2003). These laws were implemented during an ancient era, when it had been common practice pre-Islam among Arabs to bury one's daughter due to the 'shame' that she brought onto the family. Sons during this time, now more than fourteen hundred years ago, were not subjected to this type of treatment due to the honour they brought to the family (Nimry, 2009). This stark contrast between pre-Islamic Arabia and post-Islamic Arabia demonstrates the great importance given to the rights of children, regardless of gender, by the religion of Islam. Following the establishment of Islam, all Muslim Arabs were taught to value and care for children of both genders equally, entitling them to the rights of care, food, education and family life, as well as to be taught manners and morals. These rights correlate today with those laid down by the UN children's rights article.

An example of the school of pre-Islam thought is illustrated here in a narration where the Prophet (peace be upon him)², recounts having listened to a man who told the story of how he had buried his daughter prior to embracing Islam. The man is recorded as telling the following tale:

'Before I had embraced Islam, a daughter was borne to me. When I heard the news of her birth, I wanted to bury her as was expected of me. My ancestors had done the same because it was considered better to kill the

² Indeed, Allah confers blessing upon the Prophet, and His angels [ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask [Allah to confer] blessing upon him and ask [Allah to grant him] peace [Qur'an: Surah Ahzab, verse 56].

girl at birth before she could run away with someone in youth and bring shame to the whole family. The culture and tradition demanded that I bury the daughter as soon as she was born, but my heart had already developed feelings for the child and I could not do so. Time went by, and she grew day by day. Every day, I felt an urge to kill her but every day the fatherly love wrestled with the thought and put it to rest. But when she came to the age of puberty, the thoughts of her running away and bringing shame to the whole family started to haunt me every second of the day. It grew so unbearable that I could not rest; I could not sleep or eat. One day, I asked my wife to dress her in nice clothes and get her ready and tell her that I was going to take her out so she could play with her friends. Although my wife did the same, but somehow she sensed this was not what I intended to do. She kept on crying silently while she combed my daughter's hair and dressed her. My daughter, on the other hand was delighted that I was going to take her out. When she was finally done and I was about to leave, my wife mustered up enough courage to come up to me and whisper in my ears, "Don't lose your trust!" I rushed out of my house with my daughter and started on my way. I had no plan; my mind was in a state of confusion. Should I kill her or not? If I should, then how? Suddenly I saw an old deserted well that I knew was filled up with sharp stones. Should I throw my daughter in the well? My heart and mind were torn in two opposite directions. My mind told me to kill her as she would bring shame to me one day while my heart kept on fighting but the fatherly love grew weaker and weaker. All this while, my daughter had been running around me, talking to me about things she would do with her friends oblivious to what a turmoil I was going through. I could not stand it no longer; I grabbed her and pushed in the well. She must have been shocked, but all she could say was "Don't lose your trust!" and this is what she kept on repeating until I could hear her no longer.'

When the man finished his story, he looked up and saw the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet's (peace be upon him) beard was soaked with tears and he said that *'If it had been allowed to punish a person for his crimes before embracing Islam, that man would have been the first one to get punished'* (Al-Bukhari, 2002, p.83). This demonstrates the criminal manner in which daughters were dealt with pre-Islam and the change that Islam brought to this practice.

Consequently, the beginning of Islam demanded for daughters' lives to be saved, and for them to be raised honourably and equally as sons were raised. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us that:

'Whoever takes care of two girls until they reach adulthood - he and I will come (together) on the Day of Resurrection - and he interlaced his fingers (meaning in Paradise)' (Al-Bukhari, 2002).

Similarly, in another tale, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is recounted as saying:

“Whoever has three daughters whom he gives refuge to, provides for and shows mercy to, Paradise is certainly guaranteed for him.” A man asked, “And (for) two, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “And also (for the one who has) two (daughters)”” (Al-Bukhari, 2002).

This applies to having a number of daughters. As shown here, the equal rights of female children have been emphasised since the inception of Islam, over 1400 years ago. Islam came to complete the rights of both female and male children ensuring that all children were given the right to food, care, clothing, education, and the teaching of manners and morals, guiding them to becoming responsible adults.

In relation to the rights of a child, Islam has emphasised three main elements: a good mother, a beautiful name for the child, and education for the child. It has been told in Islamic teachings that a father complained to the Caliph Umar about his disobedient son. However, when Umar asked the boy about this, the boy complained about his father and the following dialogue occurred:

“O Commander of the believers! Are there no rights for a boy against his father?” Umar said “yes” The boy asked: “What are these rights?” Umar said, “To choose a good mother for him, to select good name for him, and to teach him the Qur’an”” (Al-Bukhari, 2002).

As explained above, the first rights of a child come into existence prior to conception, through the choice of a righteous spouse. In Islam, the unborn child has the right for their parents to possess the following characteristics in the following order: religious practice, good character and economic stability. The reasoning for this is that a pious husband with a good character will ensure that the man will be a good father, while a righteous wife with a good character will ensure the woman will be a good mother. The child will benefit as both parents will fear Allah and provide care, love and fulfilment of the child’s rights.

Once a child has been conceived, Allah tells us that the father should spend on the mother enough to ensure the preservation and protection of the life of the unborn child, through the following words:

‘And if they are pregnant the Qur’an stresses the importance of teaching children good manners in order to become responsible adults as Allah says

in the Qur'an "Thy Lord hath decreed, that ye worship none save Him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age with thee, say not 'Uff' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word". ' (Qur'an, Israa: 23).

These good manners towards parents and others evolve and develop through the child's upbringing from their parents, reinforcing the importance of the right of a child to be raised with good manners.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us that children are a trust given directly to parents by Allah:

'Each of you is a guardian and is responsible for those whom he is in charge of. So the ruler is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for those under his care' (Bukhari 1996).

This means that there is an explicit expectation in Islam that parents care and provide for their children to the best of their ability, and that they do not neglect their rights in any way.

Another right of a child is to be given a beautiful name when they are born, alongside teaching the child the Qur'an and ensuring the child understands its teachings. In Islam, it is believed that if a child understands the Qur'an, then they will strive for justice, peace, equality, as well to hold high morals, and will deal with others using good manners. The Qur'an is taught to all children, regardless of ability; a similar ground is set for attaining an education since understanding the Qur'an requires a child to be able to read, understand and write the Arabic language. Therefore, in addition to gaining skill in another language, the child also gains spiritual development. By this means, ritual education is embedded within a child's academic education.

Justice in Islam holds a very heavy weight. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught the Muslims to *'Fear Allah and treat your children fairly'* (Al-Bukhari, 1996; 2447). This emphasises that each child must be treated fairly and with justice; it is the right of every child to be dealt with justly. One tale that demonstrates this principle is when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was approached by one of his companions, al-N'uman bin Basheer, who said:

"O Prophet of Allah! I have granted a servant to one of my children (asking him to testify to that gift)." But the Prophet asked him: "Did you grant the same to each and every child of yours?" When the Prophet was informed negatively about that, he said: "Fear Allah, the Almighty, and be fair and be just to all your children. Seek the testimony of another person, other than me. I will not testify to an act of injustice"" (Al-Bukhari, 1996).

This statement by the Prophet (peace be upon him) demonstrates the importance of treating children equally and justly. This requirement applies equally when a child is at school. There are no texts that contravene the right to education for children based on whether they have or do not have a disability; hence equality must be achieved in learning environments for both able children and children with disabilities.

In summary, having analysed the religious evidences from the perspective of Shariah law, the governing legal and religious system in Saudi Arabia, it is apparent that Islam requires all children to be treated equally, provided care, nourishment and the right to be educated, regardless of class, ability, health, gender or any other factor. The core tenet of Islam is justice for all. Consequently, the rights for children in Islamic countries are governed by the laws laid down over 1400 years ago, which are mirrored in the West via legislation and international principles, such as the UN Convention.

Prior to the establishment of the UNCRC, a study was conducted for UNICEF to identify the standard of rights for children in many countries. The results of this study were then discussed with Islamic experts at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1985 (Volkmann, 2009). At this meeting, congruencies were found between Islam and international rights standards, based upon the statements on this subject found in the Qur'an and other religious sources. Volkmann (2009) argues that religious leaders can be important in influencing societies with large numbers of believers and therefore encourages further discussion with Islamic thinkers regarding the rights of children. This demonstrates a degree of convergence between Islam and the concepts of the UN on the topic of children's rights. However, this is a topic for more, detailed specific examination, as the details of this area are beyond the scope of this thesis but would benefit from further research.

Equality as a concept

Central to discussions of rights is the issue of equality, namely the belief that all human beings are born equal and enjoy the same fundamental rights. Equality is an ideal concept and should be the guiding principle for policy and decision making. However, equality is also an unstable concept, in that it can be interpreted and applied differently in the political and social spheres. This section examines how the concept of equality has been understood and applied in the field of education. As illustrated below, the value of equality often underpins rights policy.

Defining equality can prove challenging. It is a term often used in reference to the welfare of the disadvantaged in society. Equality as a deep and heavily contested concept, something often talked about, yet controversial (Gosepath, 2011). It might therefore be argued that there is a need for a precise, commonly understood definition that is related to justice. One example of this could be that the same level of education should be accessible to pre-school children with disabilities compared to other children. Gosepath (2011) considers problems concerning educational equality, such as how distributed education can be adequately measured; whether individuals would better achieve their potential if they received equal access to education and whether equality can take account of individual differences. Pre-school children with disabilities may require additional services, such as aids with respect to visual, physical, motor and auditory learning. Access to these will help promote equality in education by fulfilling a child's right to be educated adequately.

There is a body of literature devoted to arguments for and against using equality as a fundamental norm in law (O'Brian, 2010). Firstly, there are different kinds of equality, such as the right to access to resources, welfare, or opportunities. There are also questions about the desirability of equality. O'Brian (2010) cites authors who argue that equality is an empty philosophical concept, effectively serving as a hindrance to the attainment of sound legal and moral decisions. Raising one of the most important ethical questions in this area, Frankfurt (1987) asks whether it is more important that everyone has 'enough', rather than everyone is 'equal'. Further, O'Brian (2010) suggests that each individual needs to be treated separately.

Looking at how governments can address these far-reaching issues, Nagel (1991) argues that the law must have some inherent equality. Moreover, Dworkin (2000)

believes that equality actually is the 'sovereign virtue' of government, covering freedom, utility and community, with respect to law.

Based upon this argument, equality should not be an important concept in government, but rather proper reasoning should be given for all decisions, especially with regards to the aim of alleviating suffering. This is relevant when dealing with people with disabilities. For example, many people with disabilities may actually require more than others, meaning that equality is not the issue, but rather that each individual with disability might rightfully expect the relief of suffering and entrance into their community at large. It can thus be seen that equality is considered to be important when considering human rights and justice. In looking at this 'equality of condition', Lynch and Baker (2005) discuss the issue of '*equalizing what might be called people's real options, which involves the equal enabling and empowerment of individuals*' (p.132). This perspective is also put forward by other authors who supported the equal entitlement of children with disabilities (e.g., Lynch and Baker, 2005; O'Brian, 2012).

The literature above illustrates that the concept of equality, insofar as it relates to human rights, is by no means universally understood and agreed upon. This conceptual instability highlights the need to consider how equality is conceived in the specific context under focus. An examination of equality as it is understood in the KSA is therefore essential for this research.

Philosophers Rawls and Nozick have different views about equality and liberty. Rawls (1999) defends equality as a moral benchmark for all social and political institutions. His theory of justice is informed by the ideal of fairness, where individuals have equal basic rights within an egalitarian economic system, and that justification must therefore be provided for any movements away from equality. For example, inequalities should make the least advantaged better off than they would be with strict equality. In contrast, Nozick (cited in Lamont and Favor, 2012) claims that different distributions of economic benefits are inevitable, and that liberty is more important than equality, anyway, as equality can interfere with personal choices. In distributive justice there are morals, rather than strict egalitarianism, to consider, and

responsibility and luck are also involved. This could be somewhat unfair with respect to children with disabilities.

With respect to equality for children with disabilities, Liu (2006) examines national (US) laws. Liu's study distinguishes between equality and adequacy. In particular, it focused on an examination of whether each child be given an adequate, yet equal, educational opportunity, or whether education should strive to meet the needs of each child, including those with disabilities who may require additional compensatory support.

Mahon and Cusack (2002) discuss equality for those with disabilities in Ireland. Michelsen et al. (2009) use equality as one concept when investigating, in eight European countries, the ability of children with disabilities to participate. De Franca and Pagliuca (2007) find that people with disabilities face difficulties in overcoming poverty and gaining human rights in Brazil, despite government attempts to use equity-based theory.

According to Groce (1999),

'the lives of individuals with disability around the world are usually far more limited by prevailing social, cultural, and economic constraints than by specific physical, sensory, psychological, or intellectual impairments' (p.756).

Some of these constraints may be prevalent in Saudi society. I explored the existence and influence of these constraints, after which I provided implications of how to effectively address them. It may be difficult to establish equal educational opportunities for pre-school children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia.

The following section presents the notion of equality in Islam, and relates it to the above discussion of equality.

Equality as an aspect of Islam

No research concerning the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can fail to include Islam, which has a dominant influence on the government and people of the country. It is therefore important to state in this discussion that the religion of Islam places equality as a central, perhaps its most important, theme. There are several writings that explicitly

promote equality across all aspects of life, including and not restricted to offering equal opportunities in work and education, gender equality and equality between races. According to the Qur'an and Hadith, both males and females are encouraged to seek education and pursue a career, and there is no discrimination amongst races, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said in his last sermon:

'O People, your Lord is one. The Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab to an Arab, nor a red-skinned person to a black-skinned person, and nor a black-skinned person to a red-skinned person, except through God-consciousness' (The Prophet's Last Sermon, 632 CE).

The basis for equality in Islam is built upon the principle that Allah observes good deeds, rather than discriminating against skin colour, gender or ability. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

'Whoever works righteousness — whether male or female — while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)' (The Holy Qur'an: al-Nahl 16:97).

The principles of equality within Islam are established in several ways, one of which is 'Shura' (literally 'consultation'), or what could be described as a participatory democracy, where all individuals have equal access to decision making, irrespective of their standing in the community (Castelli and Trevathan, 2008). In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) made all his decisions in consultation with his followers, unless it was a matter upon which God had ordained. Shura is based on a community's (jamaat) views and is built on the concept of equality of all individuals in their human and social rights, and the need for these rights to be upheld and realised. As an example of this, it is known that Allah gives equal reward to those who suffer a disability and who are therefore unable to participate in the army. The relevant verse says:

'No blame is there on the blind, nor is there blame on people with disabilities, nor on one ill (if he joins not the war): but he that obeys Allah and His Messenger — (Allah) will admit him to Gardens beneath which rivers flow; and he who turns back, (Allah) will punish him with a grievous penalty' (The Holy Qur'an: The Victory (Al-Fath), 17).

There are also precepts for how to treat others, including people with disabilities. This topic is discussed explicitly in one chapter of the Qur'an, where the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was speaking to a leader in society about Islam, when he was approached by a blind man. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the man to wait a moment while he addressed the leader. Then Allah revealed to him Chapter Abasa, the verses of which admonished the Prophet (peace be upon him) and told him how he should treat the blind man, giving him an equal opportunity to speak (The Holy Qur'an: 80:1-3; 6).

In this way, for over 1400 years Shariah law has placed an emphasis on striving for equality in all aspects of life. If countries like Saudi Arabia are to ensure equal opportunities for all their citizens, then both the UN declarations and Shariah law can be used as instruments for change. A UN special reporter on disability, Al Thani (2007) has suggested that the two greatest challenges faced by people with disabilities in the Arab region are a lack of awareness about the rights that should be afforded to those with disabilities, and the perceived invisibility of people with disabilities.

Justice in Islam holds a very heavy weight. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught the Muslims to *'Fear Allah and treat your children fairly'* (Al-Bukhari, 1996; 2447). However, despite being laid down in Shariah law, there is a lack of clear and actionable legislation to protect those rights. As noted previously in this chapter, Saudi Arabia has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and generally uses this as a basis for legislation, alongside Shariah law. Given the importance of this, a core aim of the present research is to determine how well this legislation is being implemented with respect to the education of pre-school children who have disabilities.

Castelli and Trevathan (2005) investigated equality and Shariah law for British Muslim children, who can learn Shura and the principles of equality, including disability, in school and apply it in their daily lives. Within Arabic societies, equality for those with disabilities can be somewhat more problematic. Often, the general condition of people with disabilities is *'invisibility'* (Al Thani, 2007). Persons with intellectual, developmental or psychological disabilities are sometimes considered to be a source of shame and burden on their families, even if this is contrary to the

precepts found in Islam. In fact, one perception of disability in Saudi society is that it is a punishment for disrespect toward another family with a child with disabilities (Al-Mousa, 2007). It is also sometimes viewed as a test, with the patience of those who are tested being rewarded by God with a place in paradise.

Appendix 2

Confirmation from MOE

الرقم : ٢٠١٩٤
التاريخ : ١٤٣٤ / ٩ / ٢٠
المرفقات :



المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
(٢٨٠)

الإدارة العامة للتربية والتعليم بمحافظة جدة
إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

إلى : مديرة روضة الاطفال /

إلى : مديرة المدرسة /

من : مديرة إدارة التخطيط والتطوير

بشأن : تسهيل مهمة المبتعثة الباحثة / ثريا بنت عبد الخالق كدسة

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، وبعد :

بالإشارة إلى إحالة المدير العام للتربية والتعليم بمحافظة جدة رقم بدون وتاريخ ١٤٣٤/١/٢٤هـ
المبينة على خطاب إفادة سعادة الملحق الثقافي بسفارة المملكة العربية السعودية في لندن بشأن
تسهيل مهمة المبتعثة من جامعة الملك سعود الباحثة / ثريا بنت عبد الخالق كدسة رقم بدون
وتاريخ ١٤٣٤/١/١٩هـ إحدى طالبات الدراسات العليا بجامعة روهامبتون Roehampton في
العاصمة البريطانية لندن والتي تقوم حاليا بإعداد بحثها بعنوان "حقوق الاطفال المعاقين التعليمية
في مرحلة الروضة في المملكة العربية السعودية" كمطلب تكميلي للحصول على درجة
الدكتوراه . حيث ترغب الباحثة في تطبيق أدوات بحثها (الاستبانة و أسئلة المقابلة) على عينة
من المعلمات و أولياء أمور الأطفال . و (الملاحظة) على الأطفال في برامج دمج الفئات الخاصة
بالروضات و المدارس الابتدائية الحكومية والأهلية بمدينة جدة وقد تم الاطلاع على الاستبانات
وتبين استيفائها ضوابط الوزارة للتطبيق الميداني.
نأمل منكم التعاون مع الباحثة بتسهيل مهمتها طرّفكم ، شاكرين ومقدرين اهتمامكم
بالبحث العلمي.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته .

١٤٣٤ / ٩ / ٢٠
٢٠١٩٤

وسيلة بنت عمر باموسى
١٤٣٤ / ٩ / ٢٠



Appendix 3



Information Sheet for Participants

Postgraduate Research Study

Equality Policies, their implementation and their effects on children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia.

You or willing members of staff from your school are being invited to be involved in this research study. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with other members of staff from your school if you wish. Please contact me if anything is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

The research focuses on the education of pre-school age children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. I have previously experienced personally some of the difficulties associated with children with disabilities entering the pre-school system in Saudi Arabia. These experiences have convinced me to work to reform the situation for other children.

The aim of this research is to discover what factors, both theoretical and practical, need to be overcome when including children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia, and how the rights of these children, as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in Islam, can be met. These issues will be investigated, alongside any guidance that the literature and Shariah law can provide to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in Saudi Arabian pre-schools. The approaches of parents, professionals, schools and the state towards the physical, social and psychological development of young children with disabilities will be determined.

Why have I been chosen?

You and/or your child are being invited to take part in this study, as special schools are in a good position to offer insight into this topic, and express views on whether national and local policy, guidelines and initiatives around inclusion have positive outcomes for children with disabilities and comment on experiences of disclosure and referral.

What will participation involve?

Participation will involve a series of observations, interviews and questionnaires for staff, parents and children. The interview will be carried out within the school and will be audio-taped and later transcribed, and will take approximately 20-30 minutes. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription. Questionnaires will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The data generated will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose apart from writing my PhD thesis. Results of the study will be available when requested. You would be very welcome to a copy of the final report.

Please note that:

You can decide to stop the interview at any point.

You need not answer questions that you do not wish to.

Your name will be removed from the information and anonymised. It should not be possible to identify anyone from my reports on this study.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw during the interview or any time up until June 2013 and without giving a reason. If you withdraw from the study all your data will be withdrawn and destroyed.

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form on behalf of you and /or your child.

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact University of Roehampton using the details below for further advice and information:

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name Prof. Lorella Terzi

University Address University of Roehampton,

Froebel College, Roehampton Lane

London SW15 5PJ, UK

Email: L.Terzi@roehampton.ac.uk

Email;/M.Holness@roehampton.ac.uk

Investigator Contact Details:

Name Thoraya Kadasah

Department Early childhood Studies

University address University of Roehampton, Froebel College, Roehampton
Lane, London, UK

Postcode SW15 5PJ

Email kadasah@roehampton.ac.uk

Telephone +44 (0)20 8392 3881

Thank you

Appendix 4



ETHICS COMMITTEE SCHOOL CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Equality Policies, their implementation & their effects on children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia

Brief Description of Research Project:

I am currently a lecturer at the King Saud University, KSA and a current PhD student of Early Childhood Studies at Roehampton University, London, UK.

I would like to find out the level of rights given to children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia and would like to conduct this study at _____ (please insert pre-school name). I am also interested in figuring out the views of staff, teachers, parents and children in what they believe are the level of rights given to children. I would like to do this through interviews (which will be audio-taped), questionnaires and observations at your pre-school. Interviews will take between 20 and 30 minutes each. Questionnaires will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The data generated will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose apart from writing my PhD thesis. Results of the study will be available when requested.

Thank you very much for your willingness and cooperation of the school to participate in this project.

Investigator Contact Details:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Thoraya Kadasah</i>
<i>Department</i>	<i>Early childhood Studies</i>
<i>University address</i>	<i>University of Roehampton, Froebel College, Roehampton Lane, London, UK</i>
<i>Postcode</i>	<i>SW15 5PJ</i>
<i>Email</i>	<i>kadasah@roehampton.ac.uk</i>

Consent Statement:

_____*(Please insert pre-school name)* agrees to take part in this research, and/or allow staff and children to take part in this research based upon their consent, and we are aware that all participants in this study are free to withdraw at any point. We understand that the information we provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Please tick below the type of research you are taking part in:

Interview ☐

Questionnaire ☐

Observation ☐

Name:

Signature
.....

Date

Please note: if you have concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department. (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name Prof. Lorella Terzi

University Address University of Roehampton,
Froebel College, Roehampton Lane
London SW15 5PJ, UK
Email: L.Terzi@roehampton.ac.uk

Appendix 5



ETHICS COMMITTEE PARENT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Equality Policies, their implementation & their effects on children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia.

Brief Description of Research Project:

I am currently a lecturer at the King Saud University, KSA and a current PhD student of Early Childhood Studies at Roehampton University, London, UK.

I would like to find out the level of rights given to children with disabilities in pre-schools in Saudi Arabia. I am also interested in figuring out the views of staff, teachers, parents and children in what they believe are the level of rights given to children. I would like to do this through interviews (which will be audio-taped), questionnaires and observations in pre-schools. Interviews will take between 20 and 30 minutes each. Questionnaires will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. The data generated will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose apart from writing my PhD thesis. Results of the study will be available when requested.

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this project.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name	Thoraya Kadasah
Department	Early childhood Studies
University address	University of Roehampton, Froebel College, Roehampton Lane, London, UK
Postcode	SW15 5PJ
Email	kadasah@roehampton.ac.uk

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and/or allow my child to take part in this research, and am aware that both my child and I are free to withdraw at any point during the study. I understand that the information I/we provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my/our identity will be protected in the publication of any findings. Please tick below the type of research you are taking part in:

Interview ☐

Questionnaire ☐

Observation ☐

Name

Signature

Date

Please note: if you have concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

Director of Studies Contact Details:

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Appendix 6



Questionnaire for Teachers

This questionnaire aims to determine your views on the rights of children with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. Please answer all questions whilst bearing in mind children's disabilities.

Section 1: General background

What qualification(s) do you possess? (please tick all that apply)

IB ☐ Diploma ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Masters ☐
PhD ☐ Other ☐

If other (please specify) _____

What is your age?

What type of a school are you currently working at?

☐ Special needs pre-school ☐ Mainstream pre-school

What is your position at the pre-school?

Is the pre-school:

☐ Private ☐ State Funded

Does your school have a Special Needs policy?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your school have a SEN department?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How many members of staff make up the SEN department?

Do you have SEN children in your class?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you satisfied with having SEN children in your class?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what type of disabilities do they possess (please specify)?

Did you receive specialist training for your post?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please specify the type of training you received?

How many years experience do you have?

_____ years at a Mainstream school.

_____ years at an SEN school.

Do you receive a salary increment for working with special needs children?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Section 2: Assisting and facilities

Does your help include assisting SEN child in accessing the following?

- ☐ Lifting ☐ Eating ☐ Moving between classes
☐ Toilet
☐ Other _____

If it's not you, then who provides help in the above areas?

- ☐ SEN Coordinator ☐ SEN Assistant ☐ Teacher
☐ Teaching assistant ☐ Nanny

What special needs support is available for SEN children at the pre-school?

- ☐ Qualified staff ☐ Specialist equipment
☐ Specialist facilities

Are you satisfied with the level of support given to SEN pupils while moving in and out of the classroom?

- ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

Does your school provide modified transportation for children to travel to school?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is there a fee for transportation to school?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If transport is provided by the school, do they provide:

☐ Trained drivers

☐ Driving assistant

☐ Other

Do the children you are involved with appear to be happy at school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Which of the following does the curriculum take into consideration?

☐ Inclusion

☐ Differentiation

☐ Respecting individuals

☐ Accepting differences

How satisfied are you with: (please tick one preference for each statement)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The School overall					
Staff Support					
Equipment					
Teaching facilities					
Playtime facilities					
Toilet facilities					
Dining facilities					
School Transportation (if provided)					

Is the school building:

☐ Purpose built

☐ Converted into a school

What facilities are available at the school?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
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- ☐ Specialist building ☐ Specialist toilet ☐ Specialist classroom
☐ Ramp ☐ Elevator

Does the school comply with the health and safety guidelines set by the Ministry of Education?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the pre-school possess any of the following strengths with respect to SEN children?

(tick all that apply)

- ☐ Building facilities ☐ Teaching strategies ☐ Socialising with Peers
☐ Academic learning ☐ Support staff ☐ Other _____

Does the pre-school possess any of the following weaknesses with respect to SEN children? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Building facilities ☐ Teaching strategies ☐ Socialising with peers
☐ Academic learning ☐ Support staff ☐ Other _____

Do you believe children are being adequately prepared to progress in their education?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

33. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please tick one

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Natural	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Saudi government has signed the UN Convention for Human Rights.					
The Saudi government has enacted legislation to defend the rights of SEN children.					
The government has taken into account the many different types of disability in young children when creating policies.					
There are many special needs pre-schools in Saudi Arabia.					
Generally it is assumed that inclusion is better than separation for most special needs children.					
The special needs pre-schools are mainly fee-paying.					
There are many pre-schools, which will accept SEN children.					
The majority of these inclusive pre-schools are fee-paying.					
There is government funding available for each SEN child in Saudi Arabia.					
It is easy to apply and obtain this funding from the government.					
There is a good policy for inclusion in Saudi Arabia pre-schools.					
The UN Convention on Human Rights is being followed in the Saudi Arabian inclusion policy.					
Islamic Shariah law is being followed in the Saudi Arabian inclusion policy.					
There are many places in the Qur'an where equality is emphasised.					
When policy is created it is implemented quickly.					
The inclusion policy is being implemented successfully in Saudi Arabia.					
There are major gaps between policy and practice/implementation with respect to SEN children in Saudi Arabia.					
The current policy and its implementation needs to be improved					
The UN Convention on Human Rights is being implemented in my pre-school.					
The Saudi policy on inclusion is being implemented in my pre-school.					
Special needs teacher training is easily accessible and available.					

I regularly receive updates on current research in the field of special needs.					
I regularly receive special needs training (INSET) by the pre-school.					
I regularly attend special needs training (INSET) externally and at own cost.					

Please feel free to leave any comments or feedback below:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix 7

Contents of the Specialised Factors and expectations from pre-school teachers in the KSA:

The Specialised expectations for teachers in pre-schools tackles what teachers need to know and apply. They include the skills, expertise and values which a teacher needs to master in order to succeed in her work and to skill fully and efficiently execute all tasks.

The factors concentrate on performance and outcome tasks, which teachers need to master. In addition, these factors depend on the comprehensive growth pattern, and the education-focused pattern of the child who has become the cornerstone of the modern systems and international educational bodies. The factors, also, include knowledge, expertise and the trends which are related to the specialisation.

The factors are divided into six major fields which are:

1. Growth fields
2. Syllabus and teaching methodology
3. Educational environment
4. Interaction and guidance
5. Calendar
6. Partnership with the family

First field: Growth fields

Factor	Indications
The teacher supports the social and interactive development of the children.	To define the characteristics of social and interactive development of the children
The teacher supports the dynamic development of the children.	To define the characteristics of the physical and dynamic development of the children.
The teacher supports the lingual development of the children.	To define the characteristics of the lingual development of the children.
The teacher supports the cognitive development of the children.	To define the characteristics of the cognitive development of the children.
The teacher supports the mental development of the children.	To define the characteristics of the mental development of the children.
The teacher understands characters of the children, their needs and interacting factors in their growth.	To define the importance of the different aspects of development, and that each child has one entity that thoroughly and comprehensively grow and develop.
The teacher knows the theories and research about children development.	To define the theories and principles of human development and comprehension,

	including their results.
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Second field: Syllabus and teaching methodology

The teacher facilitates the environment that helps learning.	To define importance of playing, its forms, shapes and her role to facilitate this.
The teacher responds to the children's needs and interests so that learning is meaningful.	To set a daily time for personal and group playing.
The teacher plans ahead for teaching the children to make it easier for them to acquire new skills and build knowledge.	To set a plan to present the principles and activities in a logical method which goes along with the teaching units.

Third field: Educational environment

The teacher prepares the needed environment to facilitate teaching, communication and supervision.	To define the modern theories regarding setting and preparing the environment.
The teacher equips the educational environment with the tools and materials to help the comprehensive development of the children.	To use her skills, in the growth characteristics of the age group, and to set the environment that will allow the maximum comprehensive growth of children, taking into consideration individual differences.
The teacher prepares a safe environment and pays attention to health and safety procedures.	To periodically check that all tools, equipment, and internal and external furniture are safe to use, as well as to prevent and minimise injuries among children.

Fourth field: Interaction and guidance

The teacher provides a safe and positive psychological environment.	To show respect to all children.
The teacher prepares the environment inside the class so that to promote the interactive and social development of the children.	To execute educational tasks that promote the personal identity of the children and help them appreciate and respect the differences.
The teacher applies precautionary methods to manage the behaviour of children and direct it.	To distinguish the common behavioural problems among children in the kindergarten.

The teacher employs positive methods to manage the behaviour of children and correct it.	To apply methods that encourage the acceptable behaviour instead of using the consequences to correct the unacceptable behaviour.
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Fifth field: Partnership with the family

The teacher is familiar with characters of the children families and she respects their customs and beliefs.	To distinguish cultural differences among the families of the children.
The teacher knows the importance of the family role in the development of the child and in promoting the execution of the pre-school programmes.	To explain the vital role of the family in educating the children and taking the correct decisions.
The teacher builds productive relations with the parents of the children.	To work in partnership with the families of the children and to build a constant and interactive system with them.

Sixth field: Calendar

The teacher teaches, develops and educates the children using various factors and indications.	To apply adjustment methods that go along with the growth and cultural characteristics, and the needs of the children.
The teacher puts on a plan for the calendar.	To plan for the calendar to be a crucial part of the programme that promotes education.
The teacher knows the methods, aims and applications of the calendar.	To choose the suitable calendar as an organised method to promote the development and learning of the children.
The teacher adapts the syllabus to make education unique and to develop the programme.	To interact with the children to define the strengths and needs to develop the syllabus and make education unique.

Appendix 8

Sample of analysis of documentary

<i>Raw Data</i>	<i>Preliminary Code</i>	<i>Final Code</i>
The universities courses now provided require an intermediate pre-school certificate or equivalent for entry (approximately 17-18 years of age), and more recently potential teachers require high grades for entry (MOH, 2012).	Qualifications in early years	Academic background
UNESCO (2007) also states that mainstream teachers should be trained to work with children either in workshops or by attending training sessions during the pre-school year.	Training	Staff SEN experience
The SEN system in the KSA has undergone several positive changes and developments. One example of this is a ten-year plan that had been devised for the period 2005-2015 (General Developmental for Planning, 2005). More recently, the MOE has been making adjustments of the aforementioned policy, such as devising new curricula.	KSA Policy implementation	Policy implementation

Appendix 9

Sample of analyses of pre-school one data

School Name: 1

School Type: Private

School Location: Jeddah

Number of Classes: 12 classes

Number of children: 163

Children with special needs: 53 children

Extra Costs: Cost is triple for children with needs

Interviewee 1: Teacher

S1T1 She has a degree in Arabic language [qualifications].

S1T1 Diploma in special needs – learning difficulties [qualifications].

S1T1 She studying master recently [qualifications].

S1T1 Experience year and half [experience].

S1T1 She looks after 10 students in addition to her teaching [responsibility].

S1T1 The school administration is cooperating with teachers and they set very high targets but the financial support is very low and disappointing [support, resources, targets].

S1T1 Educational tools should be available to teachers and there is no intervention from the school [learning environment , access, support].

S1T1 She was surprised how some other teachers are not well qualified and they do not have any experience of how to deal with the children [qualifications, experience].

S1T1 Also the teachers usually ignore the children with special needs and focus on the normal ones [attention to special needs].

S1T1 She mentioned also that the individual needs of children were neglected by both the management and the teachers [attention to special needs].

S1T1 Furthermore the team spirit is missing [morale].

S1T1 There is little support from the MOE, who send generic plans for special needs without consideration of the specific needs for children with different disabilities [attention to special needs, policy, support].

S1T1 She complained of how some of the teachers didn't accept advice from her about SN children [training, expertise, relationships].

S1T1 So when she spends 20 minutes with each child but afterwards teachers do not follow her instructions, the child loses a lot of skills because of the missing link between her work with them and the support they get in the classroom [conflict, school's SN strategy].

S1T1 She tried her best to add a lot of materials to the learning resource room [self-motivation, resources, support].

S1T1 But she has no funds from the school [support, resources, school's SN strategy].

S1T1 She complained about the lack of sincerity and honesty at work [relationships, school's SN strategy].

She suggested that some parents would like to just 'dispose' of their children by finding any school to accept them even if the school does not help children achieve [parental attitudes, responsibility].

S1T1 She tried her best to provide workshops for the teachers but there was no response from them [relationships; training; motivation]

S1T1 She appreciated the efforts of the MOE inspector who visited the school and who usually encouraged her in her work [support, recognition, motivation].

S1T1 She complained about the lack of awareness of the convention of the rights of disabled children in the KSA [awareness].

S1T1 She suggested that workshops should be provided for both parents and teachers to increase their knowledge of disabled children's rights. [awareness, training, Knowledge of children's rights].

S1T1 Finally, she said that the KSA had a very high budget and that those responsible for the education should pay more attention to the needs of schools and children, and work to improve the educational and social interaction of children and teachers [policy, recommendation, awareness].

Interviewee 2: Teacher

S1T2 She had a degree in Early Childhood [qualifications].

S1T2 She had a diploma in speech therapy [qualifications].

S1T2 She had been teaching for 6 years [experience].

S1T2 She had attended special needs workshops [experience; training].

S1T2 She had three 20-minute sessions with SN children each week [responsibility].

S1T2 She conducted classroom observations [responsibility].

S1T2 She had responsibility for 23 students [responsibility].

S1T2 She had not complained about her resources, and was happy with what she had (but resources were very poor - books from the 1970s) [resources; support].

S1T2 She was critical of the environment in the school, which was not welcoming or accommodating of SN children [environment; support; school's SN strategy].

S1T2 She felt there was a lack of qualified people at the school [qualifications].

S1T2 She felt that some children were not helped by teachers [responsibility].

S1T2 She felt that SN children needed special attention and should not be included in mainstream education [policy; school's SN strategy].

S1T2 She felt there was a good relationship between teachers and management [relationships].

S1T2 She thought that the school was trying to change and improve on its provision for SN children [school's SN strategy].

Interviewee 3: Special Needs Coordinator

S1T4 She had been a teacher for 10 years [experience].

S1T4 She had qualifications in Special Needs education [qualifications].

S1T4 She generally followed the rules of the ministry of education [state policy; approach to her work].

S1T4 She had not attended workshops, but delivered them for the Ministry of Education [training; responsibilities].

S1T4 She was responsible for conducting diagnostic tests and was a specialist in speech therapy [responsibilities].

S1T4 She was responsible for observing teachers [responsibilities].

S1T4 She worked closely with teachers and parents (mainly with teachers) [responsibilities; approach to work].

S1T4 She felt there was a lack of ability in the school to learn from others [relationships; communication; sharing of experience].

S1T4 She felt there was too much grouping of children with different special needs together [school's SN strategy].

S1T4 She felt that the school listened too much to the views of parents, as opposed to doing what was best for the children [school's SEN strategy; relationships].

S1T4 She thought it was positive that there were two teachers per class, but felt there should be more [environment; resources].

S1T4 She thought it was positive that there was a speech therapist and a psychologist at the school [resources].

S1T4 She felt there was no information on or understanding of the rights of children [understanding of children's rights].

Interviewee 4: Parent of SEN child

S1P One daughter attended year 4, and the other attended year 1.

S1P Her daughter in year 1 had two types of disabilities, the first was weakness of her bones which was inherited and the second was learning difficulties

S1P She said that this school was recommended to her by the 'Organisation of Disabled Children' after a long difficult journey of trying to find a school for her daughter [parents knowledge]

S1P She was happy that there was a place for her daughter to study and learn despite her disability [parents attitude]

S1P She was pleased with the specialist teachers for her daughter [parents attitude]

S1P She said that pre-school building was not suited to those with physical disabilities, as her daughter had to climb four floors of stairs to get to her classroom. Consequently, she had to pay additional fees to hire a maid to tend to her daughter throughout the day at school to care for her and ensure she did not get tired whilst climbing four flights of stairs alone [learning environment]

S1P She said that she had to stay with her daughter during the school day at pre-school as she was fearful of how the maid may treat her daughter whilst at pre-school. [parents attitudes – SEN implementations]

S1P She had requested the head teacher to move her daughter to the ground floor, however, this was not feasible as there were no rooms available to facilitate this. [Collaboration -SEN implementations]

S1P She said that individual one to one sessions have helped her daughter improve her academic ability, however, whole class sessions have not benefitted her daughter much. She stressed that she has no other choice for her daughter and thus she wouldn't complain [SEN strategy – parent attitude]

S1P She mentioned she was familiar with the Saudi Policy for the rights of the child to be educated, but she exclaimed 'what's the point of awareness, if reality does not match the reality?' [parent knowledge]

S1P She said that her daughter's social development was lacking greatly as the children bullied her daughter by ignoring her due to her physical disability and She said that teachers did not encourage other children to play with her daughter [relationship –staff responsibilities]

.

Appendix 10

Sample of analysis of interview

<i>Raw Data (School 1, Teacher 1, Interview data)</i>	<i>Preliminary Cudas</i>	<i>Final Code</i>
The class teacher had a degree in Early Childhood She had a diploma in speech therapy	-Qualifications in SEN Further qualifications in SEN	Academic Background
She had been teaching for seven years. She had attended special educational needs workshops.	Teaching experience; SEN experience and knowledge;	SEN Experience and training
She had 20-minute sessions with SEN children each week. She conducted classroom observations. She had responsibility for 23 students.	Responsible for SEN children. Responsible for undertaking observations. Responsible for a full class.	Staff Responsibilities
She had not complained about her resources, and was happy with what she had (but resources were very poor- books from the 70s).	Lack of resources; Inadequate SEN support	Learning Environment

Appendix 11

Sample of observation analysis

Mohammed – Observations of a six-year-old child with Down syndrome – Monday, 21 Dec 2012, 8am-8.30am; 10-10.30am

Mohammed was observed in his school. The school is a private one, located in a building converted from a house into a school. It is located in the east of Jeddah.

Most of the people in this area are middle class – the school was established in 1993.

Access to the school is no problem for Mohammed – he is able to walk and came into the school without any help. He did not have a maid to accompany him during the school day. **[Facilities]**

The outdoor environment is 11x9 metres; it is furnished with an artificial grass carpet 5x4 metres in size. The play area is surrounded by a wooden fence; there are two swings and a climbing frame. **[Facilities]**

Between 8 and 8.30am, I observed the child in the classroom. There were nine children in the class; in addition to Mohammed there was one child with autism spectrum. The classroom was not in the main part of the pre-school, but rather outside in a room which was not designed to be a classroom. **[SEN strategy]**
[Facilities -learning environment]

The atmosphere seemed to be damp and unhealthy. The size was 5x4 metres and there was a general lack of tools and materials. There was no toilet near the classroom. **[Facilities]**

Mohammed appeared to need constant supervision. For example, his way of talking was not clear and he was understood by only one teacher. **[Staff/Child Relationship]**

Also, he asked four times within this half hour to go to get some water. This request was denied by the teacher; she obviously knew his behaviour pattern. **[Staff/Child Relationship]**

The teacher tried to engage Mohammed's attention, but she was distracted by the child with autism spectrum who continued to moan. **[Staff/Child Relationship]**

The assistant teacher attempted to get Mohammed to join in the circle time by sitting beside her, but he was willing to stay only two minutes. **[SEN strategy]**

He then got his lunch box which he opened and commenced to eat crisps (he is overweight). Then two of the other children wanted also to get their lunches, but the teacher asked them to stay in the circle. **[Staff Responsibilities]**

There was difficulty in getting Mohammed and the autism spectrum child to participate in any circle activities and this did have an effect on the other children and the teachers' patience. **[Staff Responsibilities –SEN strategy]**

The teachers tried to get Mohammed to participate, asking him several times to sit with the other children. He smiled but continued to roam around the classroom; of course, the other children watched him. In this way he managed not to participate in circle time and to be positioned in the corner that he wished. The teachers gave way to him at this time. **[Staff/Child Relationship]**

Between 10 and 10.30am I observed Mohammed during play time. There was only one teacher outside with the nine children. **[Staff Responsibilities – SEN strategy]**

Mohammed was running and walking around, not interacting with any other children and with no real goals. **[Staff/Child Relationship]**

The teacher observed the children, but it appeared to be only with respect to their safety. She sat on the stairs and seemed to be worn out. She shouted out if any of the children were naughty, but did not move. **[Staff Responsibilities – SEN strategy]**

I spoke with this teacher and asked her about Mohammed. She expressed the view that he should be in a special school; she felt sorry for him but could not see that he could do well in this pre-school. **[Teacher's attitude]**

I asked if she had expressed this view to Mohammed's mother. She said that she was waiting a while to see if he would settle in; if by the end of the term things had not improved she would speak with the mother. It appears that she lacked patience to deal with Mohammed in the classroom. **[Teacher's attitude] [Teacher's knowledge]**

Appendix 12

Observation Schedule:

(Facilities & Socialising)

Date:

Time:

Child Name:

Background of the School:

Outdoor Observation (morning period):

Time:

		Observations
1	Access to school by SEN child (ramp, wide doors, banisters, lift, automatic doors, etc.)	
2	Provision of support staff/assistants	
3	Registration and lining up outdoors	
4	Child accompaniment whilst going to class	

Description of outdoor environment:

In Class Observation:

Time:

		Observations
1	Teacher's focus towards children with disabilities.	No. of times name mentioned of child: No. of times teacher drew attention to the child:
2	Teacher's involvement of children with disabilities in class work and activities with other children.	
3	Time spent working individually with SEN child during corner time.	
4	Involvement of children with disabilities independently with other children.	
5	Involvement of other children with the children with disabilities.	
6	Staff to children ratio.	

Description of classroom environment:

Lunchtime:

Time:

		Observations
1	Provision of movement of SEN child between classroom and lunch area.	
2	Accompaniment of staff with SEN child during lunch.	
3	Provision of help to SEN child during lunch.	
4	Type of food provided to the child.	
5	Location of child's table during lunch.	

6	Socialising with other children during lunch.	
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Description of lunchtime environment:

Playtime:

Time:

		Observations
1	Provision of movement of SEN child between classroom and play area.	
2	Socialising with other children during playtime.	
3	Teacher's preparation of activities for the child promotes inclusion.	
4	Staff to children ratio.	
5	Observation of child's interaction, socialisation, movements, etc.	

Description of playtime environment:

Home-time:

Time:

		Observations
1	Location of child during home-time whilst waiting for parents.	
2	SEN child picked up by parents, nanny, etc.	

3	Provision of staff to help child pack up at the end of the day.	
4	Teacher's involvement in seeing off the child with disabilities at the end of the school day.	
5	Child's emotions at the end of the school day when leaving.	

Description of home-time environment:

Appendix 13

Pre-school Children achievement targets

Name of the child

Age:

Class:

Type of disability

Social-Emotional		
Objectives for Development and Learning	Developing Cover up to 60% of the expectation	Meeting Covers 60% and above of the exceptions
Manages Feelings		
To be able to look at a situation differently or delay gratification		
To control strong emotions in an appropriate manner most of the time		
To regulate own emotions and behaviours		
To follow limits and expectations		
To manage classroom rules, routines and transitions with occasional reminders		
To apply rules in new but similar situations		
To take care of own needs appropriately		
To demonstrate confidence in meeting own needs		
To take responsibility for own well-being		
Establishes and Sustains Positive Relationships		
To form relationships with adults		
To engage with trusted adults as resources and to share ideas and mutual interests		
Responds to emotional cues		
To identify basic emotional reactions of others and their		

causes accurately		
To recognise that others' feelings about a situation might be different from his or her own		
Interacts with peers		
To Initiate, joins in, and sustains positive interactions with a small group of two to three Children		
To Interact cooperatively in groups of four or five children		
To Use successful strategies for entering groups		
Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations		
Balances needs and rights of self and others		
To Take turns		
To Initiate the sharing of materials in the classroom and outdoors		
To Cooperate and shares ideas and materials in socially acceptable ways		
Solves social problem		
To Suggest solutions to social problems		
To Resolve social problems through negotiation and compromise		
Makes friends		
To Established a special friendship with one other child, but the friendship might only last a short while Maintains		
To have Friendships for several months or more		
Level : devolving From 1-15 Meeting : from 16-26		

<i>Physical</i>		
Objects for Development and Learning	Developing	Meeting
Demonstrates Moving Skills		

To Move purposefully from place to place with control		
To Coordinate complex movements in play and games		
To Demonstrate balancing skills		
To Balance during simple movement experiences		
To Sustain balance during complex movement experiences		
To Manipulate balls or similar objects with flexible body movements		
To Manipulate balls or similar objects with a full range of motion		
To Demonstrate fine-motor strength and coordination		
To Use fingers and hands		
To Use refined wrist and finger movements		
To Use small, precise finger and hand movements		
To Use writing and drawing tools		
To Hold drawing and writing tools by using a three-point grip but may hold the instrument too close to one end		
To Use three-point finger grip and efficient hand placement when writing and drawing		
Level : devolving From 1-8 Meeting : from 9-13		

<i>Language</i>		
Objects for Development and Learning	Developing	Meeting
Listens to and understands increasingly complex language		
To Respond appropriately to specific vocabulary and simple statements, questions, and Stories		
To Respond appropriately to complex statements, questions,		

vocabulary and stories		
To Follow direction of two or more steps that relate to familiar objects and experiences		
To Follow detailed, instructional, multistep directions		
To Use an expanding expressive vocabulary		
To Describe and tells the use of many familiar items		
To Incorporate new, less familiar or technical words in everyday conversations		
To Speak clearly		
Is understood by most people; may mispronounce new, long or unusual words		
To Pronounce multisyllabic or unusual words correctly		
To Use conventional grammar		
To complete 4- to 6-word-sentences		
To Tell about another time		
To Use long, complex sentences and follows most grammatical rules		
To Tell about another time or place		
To Tell stories about other times and places that have a logical order and that include major details		
To Tell elaborate stories that refer to other times and places		
To Use appropriate conversational and other communication skills		
To Engage in conversations		
To Engage in conversations of at least three exchanges		
To Engage in complex, lengthy conversations (five or more exchanges)		

To Use social rules of language		
To Use acceptable language and social rules while communicating with others;		
Level : devolving From -1-14 Meeting : from 15-23		

Cognitive		
Demonstrates positive approaches to learning	Developing	Meeting
To Attend and engages Sustains work on age-		
To have appropriate, interesting tasks; can ignore most distractions Interruptions		
To Sustain attention to tasks or projects over time (days to weeks); can return to activities after interruptions Persists		
To Plan and pursue a variety of appropriately challenging tasks		
To Plan and pursue own goal until it is reached		
To Solve problems without having to try every possibility		
To Solve problems		
Level: devolving From 1-4 Meeting: from 5-7		

Math		
To Use number concepts and operations	Developing	Meeting
To Count		
To Verbally count to 10; counts 5 to 10 objects accurately; knows the last number states how many in all; tells what number (1-5) comes next in order by counting		
To Use number names while counting to 20; counts 20 objects accurately; tells what number comes before and after a specified number up to 20		
To Quantified		
To Recognise and names the number of items in a small set (up to 5) instantly; combines and separates up to five objects and describes the parts		
To Make sets of 6-10 objects and then describes the parts; identifies which part has more, less or the same (equal); counts all or counts on to find out how many		
To Use a variety of strategies (counting objects or fingers, counting on, or counting back) to solve problems with more than 10 objects		
To Connect numerals with their quantities		
To Identified numerals to 5 by name and connects each to counted objects		
To Identified numerals to 10 by name and connects each to counted objects		
To Identified numerals to 20 by name and connects each to counted objects		
To Explore and describes spatial relationships and shapes		
To Understand spatial relationships		
To Use and respond appropriately to positional words indicating location, direction and distance		
To Describe basic two- and three-dimensional shapes by using own words; recognises basic shapes when they are presented in a new orientation		
To Use measurement words and some standard measurement tools accurately; uses ordinal numbers from first to tenth		
To Recognise, creates, and explains more complex repeating and simple growing patterns		

